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Robert von Neumann
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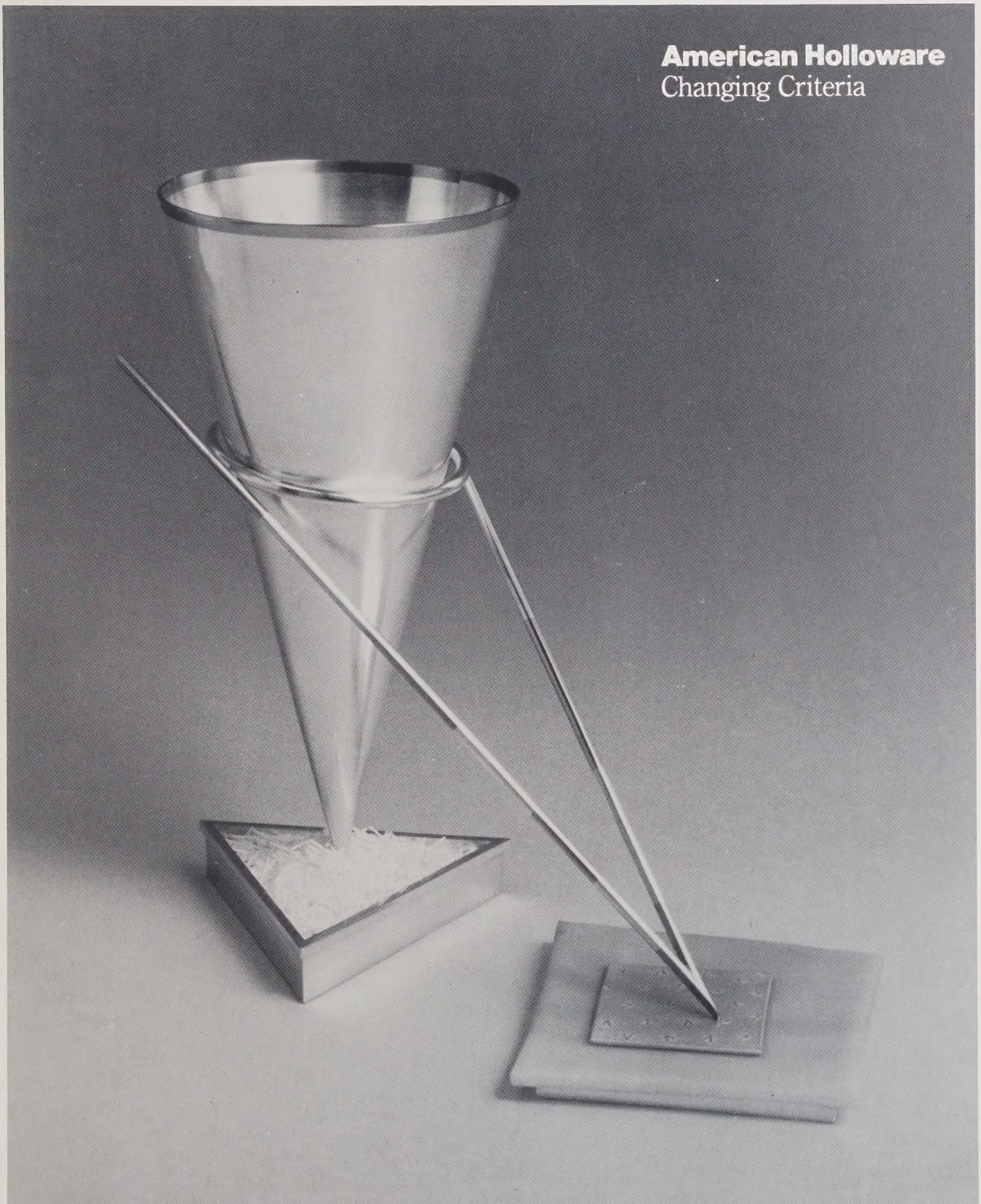

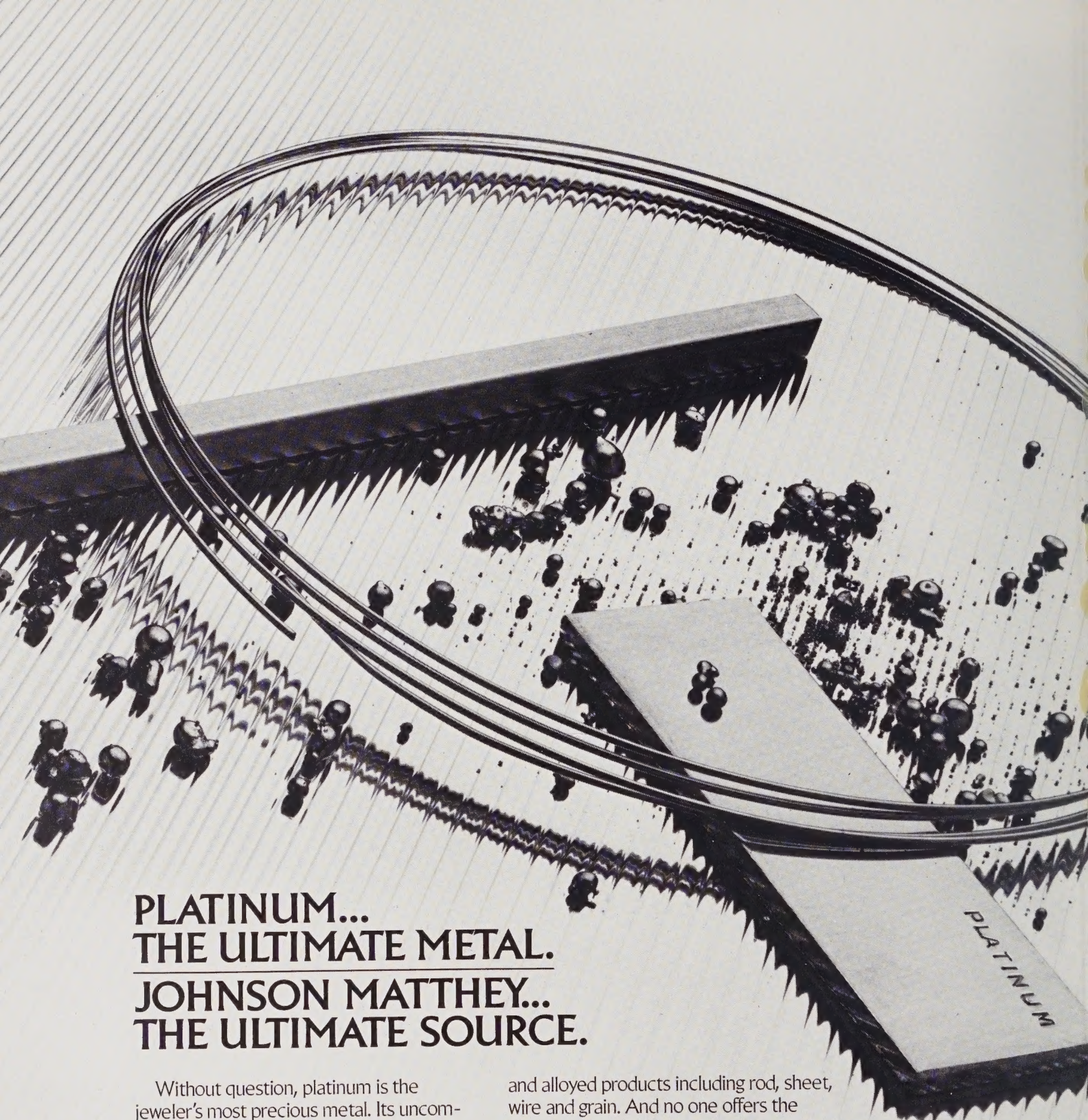

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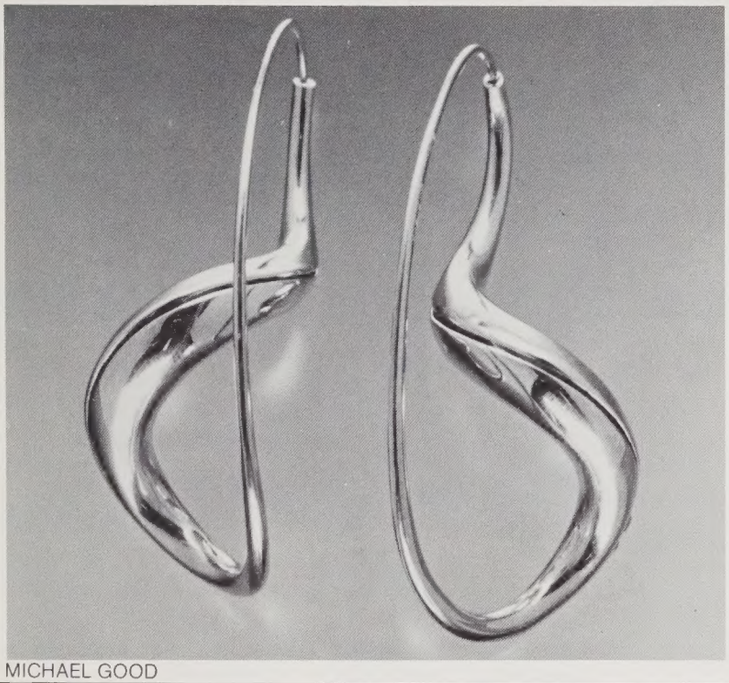

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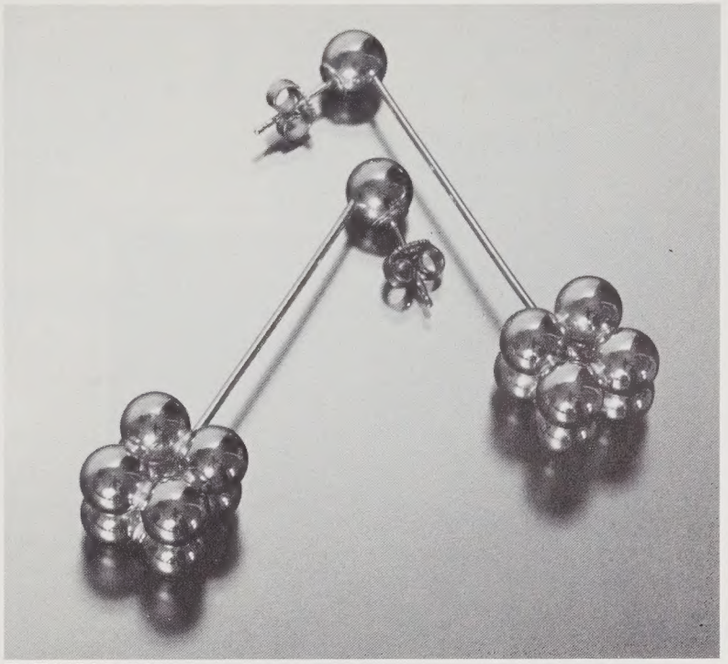

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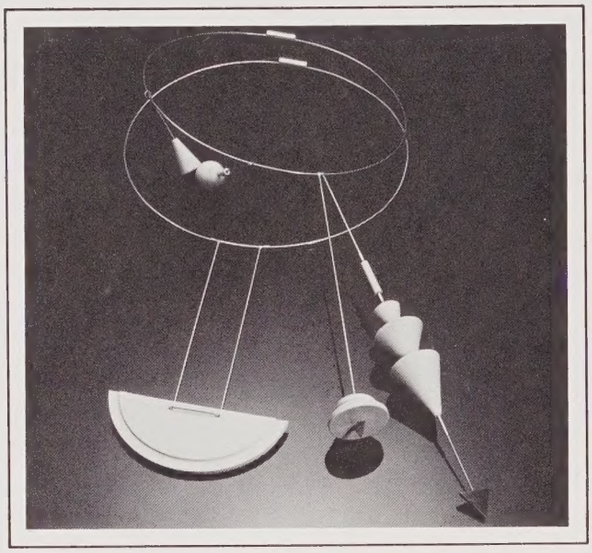

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presents

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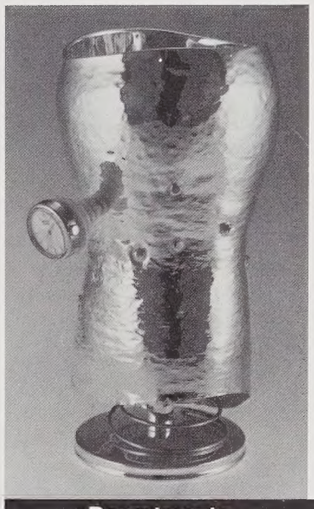

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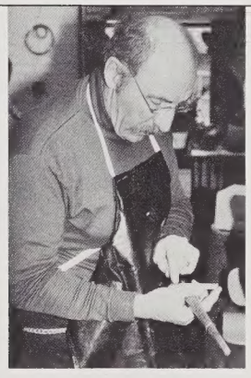

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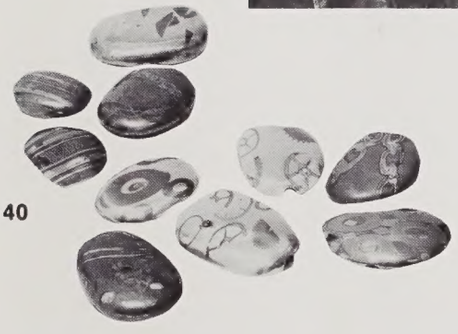

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Cover: Randy Long, *Vessel for an Alchemist,* sculpture, sterling silver, nickel silver, green glass and white enamel threads, 6½ x 6 x 3", 1983. See page 6

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Letters to the Editor

Many letters received are of interest to the entire readership. Unless stated otherwise, all letters received may be included in "Letters to the Editor." Address letters specifically for this section to: Sarah Bodine, Editor, Metalsmith, 1 Penn Lyle Road, Princeton Junction, NJ 08550. Letters should be signed and a return address given. We reserve the right to edit for publication.

Dear Editor:
I was very distressed as I read the article "Metalsmithing as Seen by Gallery Directors" in the Winter/84 issue of *Metalsmith*. I agree with the "state of flux" and that the "constant evolution is exciting and positive." I was also very pleased with the gallery directors' views and approach in their own galleries. These are personal statements of great value as such. My disagreement with the article deals with the generalizations, especially those on education.

1. When "research" is seriously done in a particular subject, it is not sufficient to sample so few people and then present their ideas as representative of a national trend.

2. As a result the article reached conclusions that at best are superficial and far from the truth.

3. I am sure there are many artist/teachers who are interested in having their graduate students establish their own creative directions. Good teachers and good artists understand that art is a personal statement—craftsmanship and technical knowledge the vehicles for achieving such statements.

4. Not only in art, but also in other fields, education is moving away from the lethargic idea of simply acquiring facts. I agree with Peters and Waterman's (*In Search of Excellence,* Harper & Row, 1982) conclusion about excellence ". . . a deeply ingrained philosophy that says, in effect, respect the individual, treat people as adults, as partners; make people winners, let them stand out. They make sure potential innovators come forward, grow and flourish. And they tolerate failure, believing that if you do not make mistakes, you're not making decisions."

For good art, making decisions is part of every moment of creation and execution. Thus, if this is absent, good art is absent.

This letter of criticism could be pages long, but I just wanted to bring attention and thought to these statements and evaluations. I would like to offer my last complaint and this is that I would expect a serious, professional magazine such as *Metalsmith* to be more responsible about the articles presented to those who are knowledgeable and, perhaps more importantly, to those not so knowledgeable about the field. Such responsibility is important if we, as professionals, are to avoid presenting erroneous and ill-conceived ideas to those who look to us for leadership.
—Nilda C. Getty
Professor, Metalsmithing
Colorado State University

Editorial

It is appalling that the National Endowment for the Arts has decided once again to suspend grants for art critics. They have done this against the recommendation of the 22 participants attending a two-day Visual Arts Criticism Seminar held, ironically, by endowment invitation last September.

Craft criticism is sorely in need of recognition and support. While craft magazines are making their mark, the pay scale for writers is still low compared to magazines in other artistic disciplines, and the NEA's decision relegates the craft critic to an even lower rung on the ladder. (Maybe craft fairs should allow writers to rent booth space so that they could then apply as craftsmen.)

An endowment report notes that one reason for axing the critical writing program is that "there is little evidence that they [the grants] positively affect the character and quantity of the recipients' work, and even less that they help raise the standards of art criticism more generally." This statement represents a kind of "catch-22" for critics. They must already write well and often to be eligible for a grant, but the effort of writing and holding another job to support themselves is often exhausting as well as limiting. If when they get a grant it allows them more time for research, thinking or travel and they do not write significantly more, although the quality and subject matter might improve, they are chastised. Are such judgments passed on the work of other grant recipients? Do the well-known artists who receive large grants from the NEA significantly improve their work after the receipt of the money? Further, does their work improve more than those who receive smaller grants? The point is, can money be directly correlated to improvement of skills, quantity of production and raising of standards?

Metalsmith has sought to encourage critical thinking and writing about jewelry and metalwork by means of exhibition reviews and opinion columns, as well as profiles of both prominent figures and emerging talent (see also *Editorial,* Winter/83, p.3). We feel there is a need for this kind of analytical evaluation to foster growth, insight and communication for those both within and outside the field. While our writers may as yet go unrecognized and underrewarded, they are essential to the survival and vitality of our magazine and we salute them.
—SB

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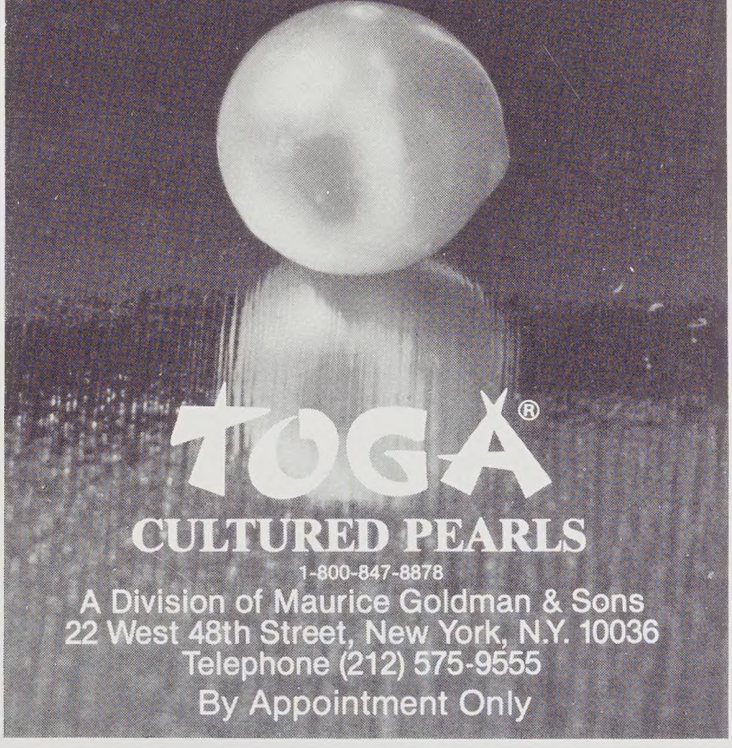

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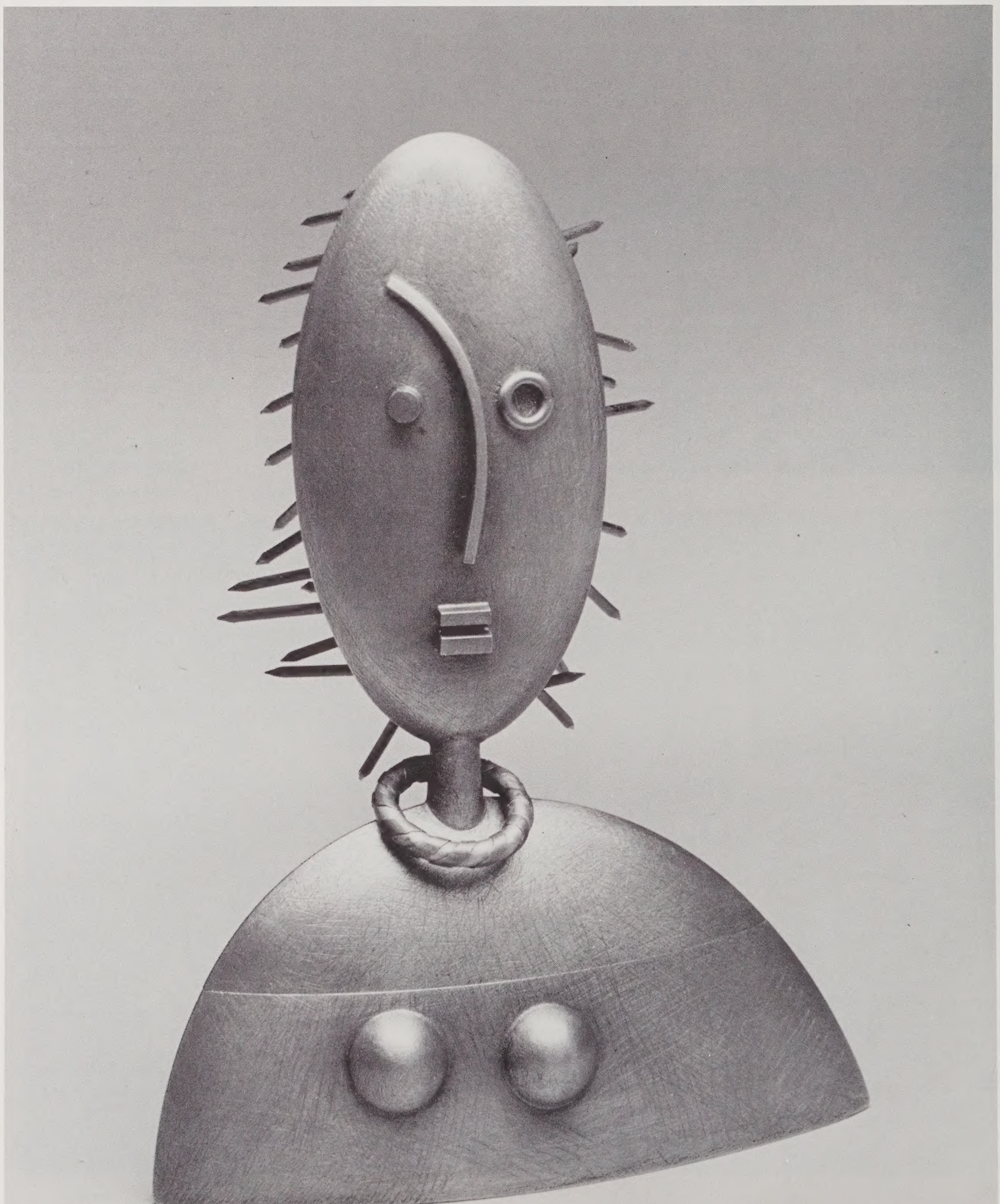
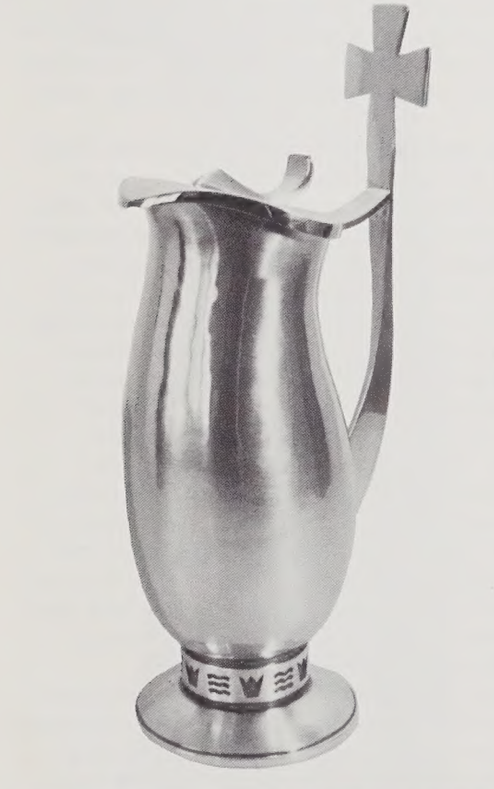
Changing Criteria



by Jamie Bennett



Top: Hans Christensen, *Power,* silver, ca. 1956. **Bottom:** Kurt Matzdorf, *Water Cruet,* designed for Church of Christ the King, Stone Ridge, NY, sterling silver, 9¼" h., ca. 1956. Photo: the artist; Courtesy: American Craft Council. **Opposite page:** Robin Quigley, *Container,* pewter, assorted metals and nails, 1983

The expressions which have come to identify the pre- and post-World War II generations—Me decade, suburban frontiersmen, spoiled baby boomers, generation gap—are clear if perhaps overly stereotyped images. While encapsulating specific attitude changes in 10- or 20-year increments may seem synthetic, the division does follow actual trends. There is little doubt that needs, goals and values vary and are sometimes polarized from one generation to the next. Each generation surrounds itself with paraphernelia which announce its identity and expectations. Statements of self are manifested in a complex structure of social and cultural reinforcement. Clothes and commodities, music and mania, religion and recreation are all subject to question and change. The differing attitudes are sometimes perceived as being quiet and tolerable or aggressive and intrusive. By instinct we righteously defend our own values and mores and question those which do not adhere to our standards.

Artists have been the observers, if often biased, and interpreters of our cultural condition. They clarify the bits and pieces of our culture and point out what binds us to our own history and what events have pushed us away to seek a new identity. That identity was clear to the artists beginning their careers in the era of Modernism following the Second World War. They felt that art should not mirror nature or society but rather that it should interpret them in a manner suitable to the medium. Further, this view of art allowed for individual vision which perceived not only positive but sometimes negative aspects of society. This responsible freedom led to diversity and resulted in an era of inventive and profound work.

In the midst of this exciting period modern American silversmithing was quietly developing. In an environment of enthusiasm and optimism ideas about form and honesty to one's own time were being assimilated by Americans from Scandinavia and to some extent from Britain.

During the 10 years following World War II a generation of American silversmithing educators were spawned from remarkably similar sources. A few events during this period would shape the identity of silversmithing and holloware, creating a style which has not noticeably changed to today. In this article I will address the issue of whether the values which governed Modernism in holloware after World War II are appropriate to today's generation of artists.

Holloware has developed basically three identities since 1945. Each has had a distinct impact on works coming out of schools today. First and most obvious are the organic and clean forms associated with Scandinavian design, ranging from the sober, sleek work of Hans Christensen to the complex skeletal forms of Heikki Seppä. Second, there are the structural forms which use natural and manmade elements as resources, such as Alma Eikerman's assymetrical structures which relate to architecture as much as to nature, and John Prip's most experimental works which reflect many of the principles of constructivist sculpture. Third are those who work in an historical context, reinterpreting images and iconography from earlier periods and adapting them to a modern context. Kurt Matzdorf's and Richard Thomas's ceremonial work are clear examples of this direction.

Let us now examine how these three identities developed. In 1945 the Rehabilitation Training Program in Dartmouth, New Hampshire, sponsored by the American Craftsmen's Educational Council, was renamed the School for American Craftsmen. It was moved first to Alfred, New York to become part of the Fine and Hand Arts Division of Alfred University and shortly thereafter it found a permanent home at the Rochester Institute of Technology. John Prip, who had been working in various silversmithing shops in Denmark, accepted a teaching position at RIT in 1948. Thus the course for RIT was set with a strong Scandinavian influence. This was later reinforced when Hans Christensen, also from Denmark, began teaching at RIT in 1954. Christensen, who had worked as a silversmith for Georg Jensen, came at the urging of Prip. He believed in the moral value of functionalism and the need for quality following the hard war years. To him quality meant simplicity in form and honesty to materials and process. Functionalism was an arm of the formalist doctrine, emphasizing form, not content or subject matter. According to Christensen, significant form was most important; representation was irrelevant. Subject matter was looked at as a denigration of the honesty to formal imperatives. "Bunches of grapes and hammerstrokes belonged to the decorative arts of the past," he noted later.[1]

Top: John Prip, *Decanter,* fabricated pewter, 9¼" h., 1968. Photo courtesy: American Craft Council
Bottom: John Prip, *Coffee Server,* ca. 1957. Photo courtesy: American Craft Council.

At its origin the Modern Movement was based on design integrity representative of its own culture and making good design accessible to a larger group. Christensen recognized, however, that modern silver table- and flatware did not have universal appeal and there was no point in "trying to unite silverware with social notions of good, cheap artifacts for everyone."[2] Unique modern silverware was made for those who wished to assert their individuality and had a sense of the present. Those who clung to the past were served by the silversmithing industry which perpetuated the traditional role of silverware as an heirloom. Therefore the Modernists' attempt to change the perception of what was significant in design and to ignore the eclecticism of the past had little early effect and drew only a select audience.

Both Prip and Christensen realized that the marketplace was not going to readily accept modern design. Instead, they educated their students to be leaders of this esthetic and to maintain its principles with the hope that it would eventually be understood. Christensen probably more than any other silversmith teaching in America emphasized optimum form in the Modernist context. Whether in silver sculptures or vessels, the resultant form existed as a coherent structural object with well-integrated elements. The viewer was offered a clear and precise visual experience. In examining Christensen's own work, as well as that of his students, we see an adherence to the modern formalism often referring to nature to provide order and structure. To achieve this fluid organic quality a suitable forming method was devised using the hammer and stake. These two tools have defined the shape of modern holloware as clearly as the wheel has defined pottery.

John Prip is not as easily categorized as Christensen. His work has followed a rather loose interpretation of functionalism, yet form is inevitably the primary concern. He most inventively used the tactic of mixing natural forms with man-made structures to create a broader variety of shapes, textures, contrasts and unlikely juxtapositions. His work shows a formal inquisitiveness as yet unmatched in holloware. He challenged the premises and rules of modern vesselmaking, charting his own course.

Of major significance in the training of American silversmiths were the Handy & Harman workshops, for these more than any other occurrence set the parameters of how holloware would be taught and what form it would take. In 1947 Margret Craver devised the Handy & Harman workshop conferences for the purpose of training American teachers in the art of silversmithing through stretch raising. She was motivated, among other things, by the belief that Americans could be as capable in this area as the Europeans and Scandinavians. Each of the five ensuing conferences, attended by approximately 12 participants, was led by well-known teachers such as William E. Bennett and Reginald Hill from England and Baron Eric Von Fleming from Stockholm, all of them functionalist-formalist oriented. Noteworthy from these workshops was the vocabulary they instilled in vesselmaking and the national scope of its impact. Some of the participants to these month-long conferences were: John Paul Miller and Frederick Miller of the Cleveland Art Institute; Alma Eikerman of Indiana University; Robert von Neumann of the University of Illinois; Arthur Pulos, first of Illinois and who later started the Industrial Design program at Syracuse; Carlyle Smith of the University of Kansas; Virginia Cute Curtain and Richard Reinhardt of Philadelphia Museum School (now Philadelphia College of Art); Ruth Pennington of the University of Washington; and Earl Pardon of Memphis Academy of Art and later Skidmore College. Indirectly, others began their silversmithing experience through the film and journals which were produced. Richard Thomas began learning and teaching holloware at Cranbrook in this manner. John Prip, who had used other methods of raising, studied the journals to produce a bowl by the stretch-raising method for the first time.[3]

As was noted in one of the journals, stretching was "a forming method particularly well suited to the development of contemporary designs of irregular and free shapes that call for unbroken lines and yet have the strength and richness of a thick edge."[4] Thus the institutionalization of American holloware began.

With remarkable courage these people broke from traditional eclecticism in silversmithing. The works which resulted were fresh and varied. Each smith used his or her own interpretation and creative skills to give the work its own Modern-

Helen Shirk, *Decanter,* silver, brass, copper, 10″ h., 1979

ist identity. These early pioneers maintained a sense of purpose in furthering the formal and conceptual vocabulary of the Modernist tradition which started at the turn of the century. Hans Christensen characterized this spirit as "a deliberate rebellion against the degenerating imitation of the styles of the past."[5] These were honorable goals and the vanguard continually pushed at the boundaries to clarify their point. Functionalism was not simply a procedure to produce objects, it was a system of closely held values. Functionalism in design was believed to be right and true design.

As the teaching of holloware grew in American colleges, exhibitions became the method of communication. The citadel of silversmithing competitions for students was and still is the Sterling Silver Design Competition, conceived of and supported by the Sterling Silversmiths Guild of America since 1958. At the outset the image of Modern design and functionalism was perpetuated through this competition. It became the showcase for those schools which pursued the esthetic of functionalism and Modern design. In early competitions student designs were produced by professional silversmiths in hopes of creating impact on both parties.

Unfortunately, very few young designers were ever absorbed into industry from this competition. The American silversmithing industry was based on tradition and little had changed there since the beginning of the century. Nevertheless, the Guild saw fit to continually support the new ideas of Modernism and was genuinely concerned with the level of quality of this competition.

In the early competitions, Modernist vocabulary and doctrine became the way holloware was discussed. Success was evaluated within these boundaries. The criteria was significant form, and anything else was considered peripheral and irrelevant. Of course, this did depend on the jurors, but they were hand picked not only from industry, but also from the established instructors in the field, most of whom had had some connection with the Handy & Harman workshops or with Scandinavian training.

These early years of the competition without question were exciting and important for silversmithing. Forms were inventive and of high quality. A clarity of intent was apparent in the work of these young silversmiths who understood and believed in the principles of functionalism. Their instructors, some of whom had originated these principles, did not merely teach techniques. In the momentum of the day, the principles of functionalism were offered with such enthusiasm that its doctrine was embraced with genuine commitment.

What then has happened in the last 20 years in holloware? Where has the integrity of the work gone? We know what guided that first generation of silversmiths after World War II. There was a changing system of values, an attention to their own culture, the need for simplicity and clarity in a quickly industrializing society and, if for no other reason, the natural cyclical development in the arts.

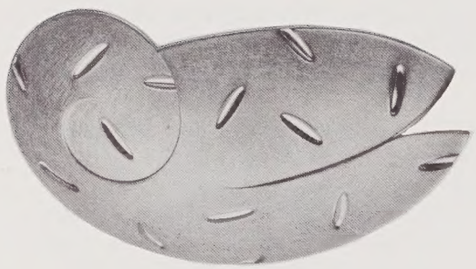
Unfortunately, what has happened since then is a greater enthusiasm for the Modern style than for the act of individual invention and commitment to a principle. The spirit of functionalism has degenerated into a system of techniques and arbitrary anonymous forms. Consider the hundreds of metal vessels which have been pushed out one way or another to imitate natural forms or pay homage to the Modernist sculpture of Henry Moore. Ironically, the Modern style has become just one more on the list of historical styles which one can imitate. The style is emulated since the guidelines are there, but without the understanding of why one makes things. As a result, most of today's holloware objects are unimportant and superficial because what should be emulated is the spirit in which the work was made, not the style.

The post-WW II silversmiths saw their lives differently, which altered their world view from that of their fathers and grandfathers. They no longer wanted to represent their ideas eclectically. They divorced themselves from that attitude, emphasizing a new purity. No longer did they want to represent the burdens of the 19th century or the frustrations and gloom of the 30s and early 40s. How can we possibly relate today to the spirit of formalism in holloware that occurred during the period that followed the Depression?

There must be honesty in the making of an art object, whether it is a painting, a building, a ceramic bowl or a metal vessel. Honesty is an act of awareness and a willingness to take risks in presenting a point of view. There has been misuse of

and/or little adherence to this principle within the current repetitive approach to holloware.

Somewhere during the last 20 years we have let pass the opportunity to clearly represent our time and our world view. Modernism has become a veil, obscuring and neutralizing ideas and issues. Objects are being produced which merely imitate the Modern process, although they try hard to proclaim their status as art or worthy form. Such a strategy inevitably produces boring objects.



Top: Janet Prip, *Bowl,* pewter, 1983
Right: Charles Crowley, *Espresso Service,* sterling silver, 24k gold plate, lacquered wood; pot 11″ h., 1983

One artist who represents the contemporary culmination of Modernism is Helen Shirk, particularly in her work of the mid- to late-1970s. Although it is perhaps past the point where any more significant statements can be made in the Modern idiom, it is nevertheless noteworthy to recognize her work. She is one of few who pushed beyond the foundation of the early silversmiths. Emerging from the influence of her teacher Alma Eikermann, she compensated for the reduction and sterility of raised vessels by interrupting them with geometric constructivist planes and surface variations. This style is as identifiable to Modern holloware as the more sober organic style and a dominant direction in American silversmithing. A particularly noteworthy example is *Decanter,* 1979. As she has stated, her interest was in "the feeling of energy created by the projection and penetration of the forms, contrast of pattern against plain, edge against fluid surface, space against mass."[6]

True to formalism the work is about form, not content. Shirk recognized the Modern parameters and challenged them. In retrospect, it seems inevitable that someone with significant abilities would produce an object which would both manifest and comment on Modernist principles. It is interesting to note that Helen Shirk abandoned holloware shortly after completing *Decanter,* concentrating instead on jewelry, which she finds more expedient to exploration of form.

As stated above, there were other identities besides Modernism in the decade immediately after World War II. Those who drew from historical forms and subject matter, both in their own work and in their teaching, were more decorative in their approach. Kurt Matzdorf, for one, was such a maverick. His work comprised primarily ceremonial vessels and sculpture for liturgical purposes, lending itself to

representational images and inconographic styles. Matzdorf and others like him were uninhibited admirers of historical resources and romantics for the return of classicism. They adapted these forms and imagery to their own sense of modernism. This small group was not so much against Modernism but for historical continuity and respect for tradition.

This respect and understanding has since, unfortunately, come to mean embracing the work of another culture or period and merely reciting it in a slightly altered fashion. Such superficial homages offer little, having nothing to do with our culture and eschewing a point of view. Drawing from the past should mean using those qualities, purposes and relationships which are relevant to us today. The abhorrence that early Modernists had for meaningless eclectic assemblage should be recognized as valuable. Much work today takes a little from the past, throws in a bit of Modernism and is finished with a taste of a new technique or material. This has nothing to do with substance or invention of new form. It is more of an uninspired smorgasbord.

Whether one is a Modernist, Post-Modernist or Anti-Modernist, it is not enough to merely memorize the language and use it without understanding or believing in its principles or its history. This then is where the problem lies. Holloware's identity has been preserved and perpetuated through a single evaluative criterion, functionalism. Whether organic, structural or eclectic, the final piece is judged by whether it is appropriately Modern. This way of thinking was right in the early 40s, but is it significant to teach in the 80s? Emphasis is and has been on a now predictable set of forms and resources. The hammer and stake was and is the formative language of holloware, occasionally embellished with constructed elements or decoration. We find the same assortment of hammers and stakes exist from school to school. We all give the same instructions on how to use them to make holloware. We crimp, stretch, raise, seam, shellform and planish in a fixed vocabulary of conspicuous process, defining and limiting opportunities before we begin. To think that the alteration of stake shapes or doubling their amount will create a rebirth of the form inventiveness is not to recognize the fundamental problem. Even the attempt by Heikki Seppä to define a working language of established form does not alter the result. To fairly evaluate holloware today we must ask ourselves: "Are Modern forms adequate to represent the diversity of interest today? In fact, why do we limit the value of holloware to form alone? Is subject matter or content still insignificant in relation to form? Are representational images still taboo?

This means of expression must suit the idea and the time. Convention has constantly been challenged because of its relevance to changing cultures and needs. The Modernists found the eclecticism and impurity of late 19th-century industrialization to be an anachronism and reacted against it. We should examine Modernism in the same insistent manner.

Who has found an alternative to Modernist holloware? There are works today which challenge the doctrines of functionalism, that suggest new relationships of form, subject matter and content. In my view Robin Quigley's *Container* is one such piece. It would not succeed if judged in the context of formalism-functionalism. In fact, her work pokes fun at formality. It is subjective, explicit and casual. There are quirky stylized details and a sense of impulsive input rather than predetermined criteria. While the work still falls within the historical parameters of metal, it is not within the Modernist doctrine. Neither are the playful geometry and storytelling of Randy Long's ceremonial vessels, nor the archetypal spiraling bowl by Janet Prip. They do, however, offer a solid base for another way of thinking about holloware and the vessel form.

Randy Long's vessels seem to have an appetite for the unlikely or unreal. The work does not fall into the self-indulgent analysis of dreams but acts as a metaphor for those experiences which reality does not offer. Although playfully composed, her magical and fantastic momentos are solid and specific. The use of precarious form relations reinforce the mystery and sense of an in-process performance which is central to her intent. Form in this case is a vehicle; content is the imperative. Janet Prip's work invokes simple forms and primitive patterning, which appeal to the child in us. They convey the unabashed quality of a doodle. Neither Long nor Prip believes holloware has to be polite or self-consciously technique-intensive.

Lynn Hull, *Basket Form 2,* painted aluminum and epoxy, 14″ x 9″, 1984

Their work is fresh and not intimidated by any traditional context.

In terms of functional vessels, a few artists have emerged recently who once again have a sense of responsibility, who are concerned with offering something to the field rather than taking from it. Their work is not hyperbole and technical showmanship, but offers personal substance and meritorious design. There is a sense of coherence and visual pleasure derived, for example, from the crisp geometric simplicity of Charles Crowley's espresso service or the understatement of Linda Hull's *Basket Forms*. Both Crowley and Hull have opted for spinning, an appropriate technique to achieve their geometric forms. They also employ lacquers and enamel paints to add a dimension of life and color to the otherwise cool grayness of silver and aluminum.

It is refreshing to see works which address the vessel form and emphasize its structure by patterning and coloring. Other artists have taken vesselmaking out of the strict context of utility to make us more sensitive to the psychological and ceremonial implication of the object. Christopher Allison and Edd Deren's vessels make use of "appropriate" technique to best exemplify their intent. Their pieces are rich not because the surface is polished, chased or patinated, nor because the form is properly raised or the solder seams invisible. The work has strength because the surfaces are finished with sensitivity to the concept.

Technique is then a significant element in the development of holloware. But just as a ceramic bowl does not lose consequence because it is handbuilt rather than thrown, or a piece of sculpture because it is constructed rather than cast, let us not then define holloware by the hammer and stake alone. This sort of restriction is not appropriate to today's pluralism.

In this context other inspired works come to mind which are worth noting. Particularly the Alessi collection of coffee and tea services designed by architects (see *Metalsmith* Spring 84, pages 36–38). While they all might not be functionally precise, they do offer fresh alternatives, incorporating inventive architectural resources.

While we could theorize that the work mentioned above marks a beginning of a revitalization for holloware, caution should be observed in this search for newness. Substantive innovation should not be confused with superficial alteration. Attaching titanium details or New Wave patterns to forms may be new, but it is as accommodating and shallow as any period or cultural adaptation. Why should we dilute our own intentions with someone else's identity?

Another pitfall the metalsmith faces is the relentless hunting for "tricks," techniques and processes, often pursued with a vengence unknown to any other artistic discipline. There is nothing wrong with seeking appropriate methods of expression, but a material is only a material and should not be relied on to update an otherwise weak idea or form. For holloware to develop and exude the vitality it had 35 years ago, it must be infused with outside visual inspiration, not more material and imported techniques. We must be able to look into ourselves for our own uniqueness without self-indulgence. It is only with that combination that we will again see vitality in this medium. We have been living on the sound foundation estabalished by Margret Craver, Hans Christensen, Alma Eikerman, John Prip, Richard Thomas and others for too long. As Christensen stated a few years ago, "What is new is not good, what is good is not new."[7] It is time to rethink and revitalize holloware.

Edd Deren, *Untitled,* copper, electroplated, vitreous enamel, 9 x 6 x 6″, 1983. **Opposite page:** Christopher Allison, steel form, slightly rusted, with brass circles brazed and colored blue

Notes

1. Hans Christensen, "Observations about Design and the Crafts Movement in Denmark, 1880–1980," notes from "American Metalsmithing and Jewelry in the 1940s and 1950s," a research conference, 1982, p. 10.
2. *Ibid.,* p. 11.
3. Information courtesy of Robert Cardinale through the "American Metalsmithing" research conference, 1982.
4. Handy & Harman, "Contemporary Silversmithing," 1952, p. 4.
5. *Ibid.,* p. 15.
6. "Contemporary Silversmiths" exh. cat., St. Petersburg, FL: Museum of Fine Arts, 1979, p. 28.
7. *Op cit.,* Christensen, p. 12. ■

Robert von Neumann Master Metalsmith

by Carol S. Fisher

Robert von Neumann at work

This article was completed just weeks before Robert von Neumann's accidental fall and subsequent death on April 23, 1984.

Goat Pin, silver, 1954. Photo courtesy: American Craft Council. **Opposite page:** *Flatware,* silver, ca. 1954. Photo: Charles Uht; Courtesy: American Craft Council

Books and artifacts—from Eskimo masks to Picasso prints, from anthropology to art history—as well as wildlife—aquaria of native fish, nesting birds, wounded muskrats, hatching butterflies—all were Robert von Neumann's childhood companions. While exposed to the art world by his father, a painter, printmaker and professor of art at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, he was also encouraged by his mother to explore natural history. Summers were spent at the western Great Lakes—Michigan and Superior—and the northeast Atlantic coast of Maine and Massachusetts following commercial fishermen, his father's favorite subject matter.

Von Neumann now admits he was ". . . an indifferent, wool-gathering student in school. . . ," who took a college level course in basic zoology and found the process of scientific training terribly boring. In World War II he joined the military and served in the ski troops of the 10th Mountain Infantry Division, spending the war years in the Colorado Rockies and Italy.

After the war, von Neumann enrolled in the School of the Art Institute of Chicago to major in painting and illustration, but found those forms of expression to be unsatisfying. While browsing in the library he came upon a book written in 1902 by H. Wilson called *Silverwork and*

Jewelry. Interested, he began teaching himself the basic processes of sawing, filing, soldering and finishing. Since there were few retail jewelry tool suppliers in Chicago in 1947, he used what could be found in hardware stores—bulky, shark-toothed pliers, heavy saw frames and a gas mouth blowpipe which attached to the front burners of the kitchen stove.

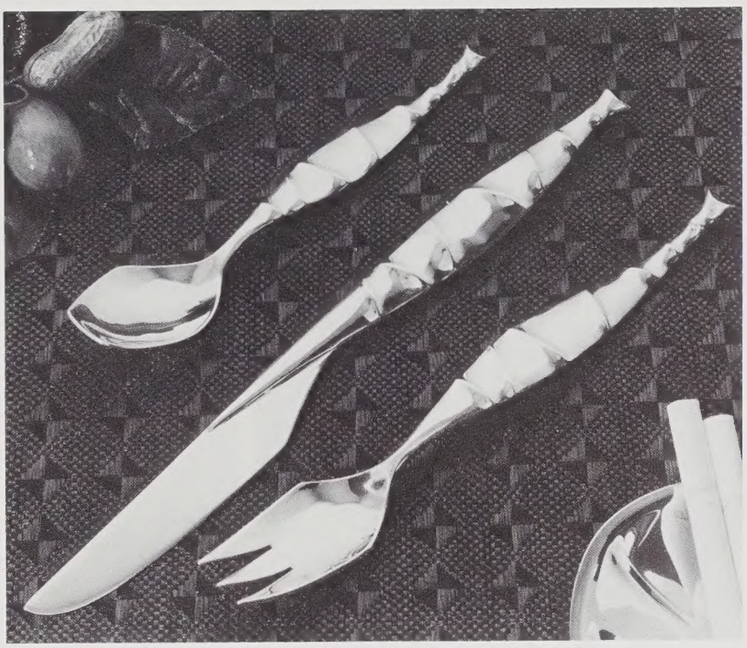
During the late 1940s, few people in the country were concentrating on decorative metalwork. Alexander Calder had done a number of pieces, and New York jewelers Paul Lobel and Sam Kramer occasionally had work illustrated in fashion magazines. In Chicago, Robert Peirron and Quentin Neal were trained in painting, sculpture and design, and, like von Neumann, were working in decorative metalwork. A number of small galleries began to show this unique work on consignment—a reasonable 10 percent in those days. Display techniques were primitive and the appearance of silver objects began to deteriorate the moment they went on display. Tarnish, if removed at all, was removed with paste silver polish, so that recessed and oxidized areas soon looked terrible.

Fortunately, there were also a number of national exhibitions exclusively for the decorative arts, that is, ceramics, metal, weaving, enameling and some woodwork, and they were beginning to attract more and more artist-designers. Von Neumann entered many shows: the National Decorative Arts and Ceramics Exhibition, Wichita, Kansas; First National Decorative Sculpture and Crafts Show, Sarasota, Florida; Fiber, Clay and Metal, St. Paul, Minnesota; and Designer-Craftsmen USA, Brooklyn Museum, Brooklyn, New York, where he collected prizes and purchase awards. Regional competitive and invitational decorative arts exhibitions were also beginning to gain momentum and reflected a growing interest in all of the media.

Concurrently, a number of national and regional associations of the decorative arts began enlarging their memberships. The American Crafts Council became the predominant force in increasing public and professional awareness. The ACC magazine, *Craft Horizons* (now *American Craft*) led the field in articles on techniques and materials. The ACC also sponsored important exhibitions at the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in New York City.

After receiving his BFA from the Art Institute, von Neumann began to search for graduate programs in metalwork and soon heard that the University of Wisconsin at Madison was about to start such a program. The powerful driving force behind the Wisconsin program was Arthur Vierthaler, who through overwhelming enthusiasm, persistence and great technical knowledge, had found space, equipment and financial support for several undergraduate courses in metalwork. (In 1948 the school initiated a Master of Science in Applied Arts in metalwork.) As the first candidate in the new metals MS program, armed with a teaching assistantship, von Neumann found himself teaching several classes in which he was also enrolled.

Vierthaler encouraged competency in all metalworking techniques, not only fabrication but enameling, casting, lapidary work and toolmaking. He also instilled a respect for and fascination with techniques of the past. Wisconsin soon accumulated one of the best metalworking reference libraries in the United States. Vierthaler's attitudes concerning all-around competency influenced



von Neumann, and he has always hoped to instill similar values for competency and expression in his own students.

Upon graduating from the University of Wisconsin in 1950, von Neumann landed one of the two academic positions available to his class. During the next five years, while teaching the gamut of courses offered in art by Iowa State Teachers College (now Northern Iowa University), he produced several hundred works, primarily in sterling silver and karat golds. His subject matter reflected then, as it still does today, his love of forms in nature, mammals, birds, fish and dinosaurs as well as mankind and mythology—Greek myths, Old Testament stories and Arthurian and Northern European fables.

Particularly important in von Neumann's work is the human male, encrusted in armor, hopefully fierce, often pompous and always ornamented elegantly. The images are always sculptural, even narrative, often satirical—seldom simply abstract decoration. The sources for his imagery are best expressed in his words: "I have had a personal prejudice—for myself only—against the non-objective image, exquisite as this often can be. There is, built into this kind of form/invention, a kind of anonymity that depresses me. Much work, whether it be painting, ceramics, sculpture or what have you, lacks the fingerprint of only one creature on this earth, one being who in visual expression, invests the image with the entire complexity of background needed to form the artist. Call it style, call it identifiable image, but it *must* reflect that which only one being can invent. I try to do this with my own work—which has seldom been fashionable—and I try my best to encourage this kind of confidence in 'self' in my students.

"Fashion, often dictated by all the wrong motives (profits for the gallery owner, quick fame for the artist, reflected glory of the museum curators and art critics) has a short life today. Visual information takes moments to circle the globe. That which is the height of success in an artistic medium at this moment in New York, London or Tokyo will be jaded by the time an art student becomes aware of it and its short success span. The temptation to be influenced and to cash in on the vogue is great, but it is always a 'catch up' game.

Pendants, silver. Photo courtesy: American Council. **Opposite page:** *Warrior,* wall sculpture, stoneware, 30″ h., 1969. Photo courtesy: the artist

"Though I was comfortable working in cultural isolation—on a table next to my bed for a studio (metalworkers need little space, just deaf neighbors)—I became somewhat involved in organizational aspects of the decorative arts. I had not properly learned the lesson painfully experienced by my father that, like mushrooms, art 'leagues,' 'associations' and 'organizations' grew, spouted manifestos, built memberships and soon died through internal jealousies and ennui. How often he contributed his time and energy, and how soon he regretted it. Then, watching him through years of entering his prints and paintings in national and regional exhibitions, to be elated when accepted, ecstatic when winning prizes and deeply depressed by rejection, also taught me much about such lotteries. I can understand the need, for young artists especially, to exhibit often. This is how the game is played. What they should *not* do, and what I do *not* do, is peg their personal sense of values on such successes or failures. I have been on dozens of juries. I realize how much compromise and aggressive domination can dictate results. Competitive shows are a lottery and standards change each time a new jury is appointed. I have always been fortunate in such shows, but if I had to attach value to exhibitions I would place much more on the invitational exhibition which, after all, should reflect the growing importance of a given artist. Even then, those doing the inviting are often less than objective and such shows can reflect quite narrow biases. All in all I approach this aspect of artistic activity with as much humor as possible.

"Organizational activity in the early 50s consisted of becoming a member of the American Crafts Council and participating in several meetings in New York and Seattle. Perhaps I should have remained in such organizations, if only to represent my point of view, which is fundamentally this: 'Art is to do—not to talk about.' My father gave me another version of this when I presented him with the first edition of my metalwork textbook, *The Design and Creation of Jewelry.* 'Some people do it, others write about it.' A bit crushing at the time, but I can see the justness in his attitude.

"The 'crafts' field especially seems overfond of clusters of like-thinking souls. Somehow painters, sculptors, etc., have never been able to mount viable interest groups. Even Artists Equity, once including major names in the visual arts, lasted for only a few years. Not so with crafts groups. Is it because standards of excellence are generally still lower than in other media? Does this result in a collective self-congratulation which ignores critical insights? Are marketplace realities so important that interlocking sales efforts require this sort of grouping? In my experience, the best metalworkers, the most innovative potters and weavers have not needed the collective impact of

an organization to succeed in the acceptance or sale of their work. Quality brings the consumer to one's door.

"One group that differs greatly from the multitude of guilds is the Society of North American Goldsmiths. Before I comment on what I feel to be its virtues, and they are many, I'd like to express my unhappiness with not only the name itself but especially its acronym 'SNAG.' The former is pretentious, inaccurate and awkward. The 'North American' limitation is not necessary for an organization which is based in the United States and 'goldsmiths' is much too limiting. Where do the ironsmiths, silversmiths, jewelers, enamelers, etc., fit in? The term 'goldsmith' is really quite narrow, especially considering how relatively few artist-craftsmen work exclusively or even primarily in this metal. The acronym SNAG is both ugly and strained in its coy attempt at 'with it' humor. It belies the seriousness of purpose demonstrated by the organization 'Society of Metalsmiths' (though implicitly excluding enamelers) is much more accurate, lean and to the point.

"The system for acquiring full membership through peer review is not of itself a bad idea. It must, however, be immaculate in its administration and must constantly review its own objectivity and honesty. A task not notably successful even in the heyday of the guild system in Europe and elsewhere.

"What is really extraordinary about (forgive the expression) SNAG is its conviction that the broad spread of technical, historic and experimental information is healthy and to be supported. Through *Metalsmith* magazine the practitioner can learn through another's recent experience. Information about the directions of individuals and schools found in the critical articles and excellent photographs brings the movement into focus in a most successful manner. I am not aware that any other organization or publication has this success.

"In general, however, I have always felt ill at ease in the organizational milieu—too much socializing, too much political maneuvering, too much genealogical involvement with who studied with whom."

By 1960, von Neumann had been at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign for five years and was a prolific jewelry artist-designer. His work was shown in the United States Pavilion at the Brussels' World Fair in 1958 and was a part of a United States Information Agency exhibit that toured Europe and the Near East from 1958 to 1961. During this period, his work in metal had been developing into greater complexity in technique and scale. He had long been fascinated by traditional Japanese metalwork, dating from the gift of a family friend of a small ceremonial Samaurai sword when he was a boy. The richness of detail, the almost incredible mastery of chiseling, overlay, inlay, patinas and lamination stimulated many attempts, on his part, to redirect these ancient processes into contemporary Western expressions. He was especially influenced by the willingness of the Japanese artist-craftsman to use metals and their alloys in a purely coloristic manner. When precious gold or silver were used, it was for the rich warmth of the gold or the cool, reflective mood of silver. The intrinsic value of one metal over another seemed quite unimportant, and the most unlikely combinations, in Western terms at least, of pure gold, roughly forged or cast pig iron and lead, worked because the craftsmanship and esthetic concept was highly sophisticated.

"We in America are now coming to the same way of thinking about metals. In our case the motivation is to conserve the expensive metals, but the results are equally valid and handsome. In a given work today one might find acrylic plastics, pearls, electroformed copper, nickel-silver sheet, gold inlay, etc. What the artist does *with* materials is more important than potential investment or resale value—these latter being the reason for the existence of much jewelry in earlier days. I find this free choice in material and process very healthy, and the current attention to mastery of the old and new brings great seriousness to the profession.

"By 1959 I had accumulated such a sheaf of notes and class outlines on jewelry processes that it seemed logical to organize them into a book. There was the need for

Lost Astronaut, stoneware, 24" h., 1971. Photo courtesy: the artist. **Opposite page:** Pendants, *Adam and Eve III,* 1953. Photo courtesy: American Craft Council

a serious book at that time, one to reflect the serious, artistic approach. The few technical books available were either outdated in terms of process and design attitude or they were utterly simplistic how-to-do-it volumes. What I felt was needed was a text that told the 'how' in the words of an instructor sitting at one's elbow and guiding from basic to ever more complex processes. The 'what' was dealt with philosophically and with flexibility, encouraging the need for a unique expression of self. I tried to avoid telling the reader, either directly or by implication in photos of work, what the 'going thing' was, knowing full well that the 'going thing' goes very rapidly. Ninety-five percent of the illustrations are of work done by beginning students—my own students at the University of Illinois. This was done intentionally. Too many books show the handsomely made and sophisticated form inventions of established professionals in the field. I felt this could be too intimidating for the beginner. I've heard a number of times that people felt enough at ease with the book that they were able to teach themselves with its guidance.

"In 1960 I was asked to be part of a four-person team of two industrial designers, a potter and a metalsmith, to tour parts of Japan for two months. The State Department's International Cooperation Administration and the Japanese Government wanted us to view traditional handicraft products in various regions. We saw work in ceramics, paper, bamboo, wood, fabric and toys but very little in metalwork. Decorative metalwork using ethnic Japanese processes was limited to a handful of individual Japanese artists at that time, with only a Kyoto-based niello and overlayed jewelry industry that could be called traditional. At that time the museum of the University of Art in Tokyo and the metalwork courses offered by that University were virtually the only locations for the study of chiseling, overlay, inlay, lamination, casting, holloware and patination.

"The greatest impact of this two-month visit was seeing how deeply rooted the ceramic tradition is in Japan. Early forms, such as the slab built Haniwa figures, were especially compelling to me since they also treated the human form encrusted with armor."

From that time on Robert von Neumann began to work in clay almost to the exclusion of small-scale metalwork. He took great pleasure in working with larger forms in clay, a malleable and forgiving material. After years of working with resistant metal, he felt an incredible release. The imagery was the same but scale, color and surface were different and tremendously exciting to him. From the beginning he combined elements of formed, chased, repousséed, etched and patinated metal with the stoneware and porcelain forms. But the main thrust was always the clay. The size was somewhere between one and six feet in height, and the stoneware reduction glazes and added metallic luster glazes were always important elements. "I realize it probably shouldn't be a factor, but the relative monetary return of clay sculpture versus metal jewelry became evident very early on. I soon realized that the marketplace dictates that a three-foot-tall clay and metal figure is worth so much, and a brooch or a pendant—even of silver with gemstones—can only be worth one-fourth as much. The jewelry piece might represent impressive mastery over several processes and might have taken two to three times as long to complete. The intrinsic value of materials alone might be worth 10 times that of the clay object. This double standard, somewhat better adjusted today than even a decade ago, has always irritated me, and it is irrational in our society." Recently von Neumann has returned to doing some work in sculptural jewelry using metal in combination with other materials such as plastic, wood and clay, but he has not abandoned the larger clay combination sculptures and still makes that his major area of concentration.

Von Neumann, as an educator, is concerned about today's students and the philosophy behind their education. "Most young visual artists today go through a foundation training program that is essentially identical for the painter, sculptor, designer and metalworker. Usually the student doesn't begin his major concentration until the junior year. I continue to feel that the artist today should develop skills and expressive abilities in a far greater variety of media than formerly. It certainly is much less rare today to find an individual who is a painter, jeweler, ironsmith, photographer and designer. Each area requires the same dosage of keen perception, imagination, and the ability to be one's own severest critic."

"This philosophy has been reasonably successful. Our undergraduates have been accepted in the best graduate programs around the country—almost always with financial support. We have been in on the beginnings of the careers of many nationally and internationally recognized metalsmiths, such as Eleanor Moty, J. Fred Woell, Francis Stephen, Lane Coulter, Joan Weiskopf, Anita Fechter, Marvin Lipofsky—all undergraduates in metal at the University of Illinois or Iowa State Teachers College.

"I am much impressed by the truly superior craftsmanship of the current metalworkers. There is an elegance of execution and an inventive use of new materials that has not been seen before. I think that artists like Al Paley and Eleanor Moty have been tremendously influential in this direction in the United States and Claus Bury and Wendy Ramshaw have led the way in Europe.

"Sometimes flawless execution gets in the way, however, and a juiceless coldness results that is all technology and no humanity. Jewelry should have humanity. It should enhance, not diminish, the wearer. Unfortunately

there seems to be a current abhorrence for the decorative, the unabashedly delightful." Von Neumann feels strongly that today's art students should investigate the humanities, the classics and particularly art history to flesh out their knowledge and background and develop a healthy curiosity about all of life, past and present. Almost all art students are exposed to some Western art history, basically architecture, painting and sculpture, and very few are aware of what mankind has achieved in the Near and Far East, Africa, Melanesia, Micronesia, Polynesia and our own diverse hemisphere. Reading folklore, myths of all lands, science fiction—things that stimulate inner vision—can bring that humanity back into art. This exposure should be part of the student's total training. Von Neumann feels that the ability to draw, to delineate the mental image, is of utmost importance. The act of drawing helps the artist-designer create a preliminary order out of the chaos of possibilities the mind generates. And drawing helps to communicate with the potential consumer of art as well. This is perhaps more important to the artist-craftsman than to anyone else.

Life has been full for Robert von Neumann, not only teaching, writing and doing his own metalwork and sculpture, but also investigating and enjoying the world. He and his wife, Mary Willson, a professor of ecology at the University of Illinois, spend as much time as possible backpacking, canoeing, biking, skiing, rafting, testing themselves and enjoying the challenge of the wilderness.

Von Neumann continues to enjoy those interests developed as a child—keeping aquaria and writing articles for aquarist periodicals and building models of oil sailing ships, which he has sailed in both oceans with his three sons. The von Neumanns have also built, and constantly add to, a house and terraced gardens in Wisconsin where they long to live and work full time.

Robert von Neumann says his plans for the future are: "First a trip to the high Canadian or Greenland Arctic to hear wolves singing and watch the walrus and narwhal. And to continue work in sculpture, stoneware, porcelain, metal and wood, using as subjects mythological and biblical events. More ship models, more aquaria, more! more! more!" ■

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The Arts and Crafts Movement and its influence on American Metalwork

by Deborah Norton

Roycroft Blacksmiths. Photo courtesy: The Roycroft Inn, East Aurora, NY

Louis Comfort Tiffany, Tiffany Studios, Corona, NY, *Lamp,* pressed glass, cast bronze, 1901. Photo courtesy: The Margaret Woodburn Strong Museum

"It is allowing machines to be our masters and not our servants that so insures the beauty of life nowadays."[1] Ironically, this quote does not come from a contemporary philosopher decrying the computer age, but rather, from William Morris, the leading force behind the 19th-century British Arts and Crafts Movement. As English critics Thomas Carlyle and John Ruskin had done earlier, Morris denounced the Industrial Revolution and the wrongs brought with it. Rather than alleviating the drudgery of manual labor and freeing workers for more leisure time, mechanization proved dehumanizing. It created a world where the designer was no longer the maker of the object and where concern for beauty was replaced by concern for economy and profit. This resulted in poorly designed goods, poorly executed by exploited workers. Carlyle and Ruskin railed against this, but it was William Morris who acted.

While studying medieval society at Oxford University in the early 1850s, Morris began to formulate his philosophy which eventually became the basis for the Arts and Crafts Movement in England and America. He felt the designer and maker should be one and the same as in medieval times, asserting that it was an inalienable right of workers to enjoy and take pride in their work. Years later he was quoted in *The Craftsman* magazine as saying, "It is right and necessary that all men should have work to do which shall be worth doing, and be pleasant to do; and which should be done under conditions as would make it neither over-wearisome nor over-anxious." By freeing workers from enslavement to machines through the revival of traditional crafts, he hoped to create a better, more moral society. His efforts to bring about great social change stemmed from the following observation: "I have come thoroughly to understand the manner of work under which the art of the middle ages was done . . . only to discover that it is impossible to work in that manner in this profit-grinding society. So on all sides I am driven toward revolution as the only hope." Although he was never successful in bringing about the social revolution he called for, Morris created a revolution in crafts which had far-reaching and long-lasting effects. Today's studio craft artists in both America and Europe are indebted to the Arts and Crafts Movement for reviving the craft tradition.

Morris put his theories into practice in 1861 when his design firm, eventually to be called Morris and Company, was launched. Good design and quality craftsman-

ship marked his furniture and other objects for the home interior. He was a self-taught artisan, learning the various crafts through trial and error. He understood the artistic nature of the craftsman and the need for total dedication to artistic principles. Morris noted that "The true workman . . . must have a natural aptitude for his work so strong that no education can force him away from his special bent . . . He must refuse at anybody's bidding to turn out . . . an indifferent piece of work, whatever the public wants or thinks it wants."

Although Morris and Company was quite successful, it was 20 years before the Arts and Crafts influence in England became pervasive. It was at this time that handmade art jewelry was revived. Because William Morris was not actively involved in jewelrymaking, it was his followers who expressed the Arts and Crafts ideals in this medium. Taking their cue from John Ruskin, who had been outraged by the harsh brilliance of diamonds in Victorian jewelry, Arts and Crafts jewelrymakers created pieces characterized by simplicity, often based on natural forms and using the unpretentious cabochon stone cut. Aymer Vallance, a critic writing in 1902, disdained the use of diamonds in Victorian jewelry that he felt were introduced purely to flaunt "the commercial value they represent in pounds sterling." He observed optimistically that "mere glitter and the vulgar display of affluence are gradually yielding before the higher considerations of beauty of form and color."[2]

Charles Ashbee, an English architect and metalsmith, preferred to work with semiprecious gems such as amethysts, amber and blister pearls. Arts and Crafts principles led him to believe that "the value of personal ornament consists not in the commercial cost of the materials so much as in the artistic quality of its design and treatment."[3] Abhorring the shiny surface of Victorian silver, he pioneered the matte finish which became quite popular. This rejection of Victorian ornamentation in favor of simple designs and quality craftsmanship was to be echoed in all other craft media.

The British Arts and Crafts Movement made its debut in America in 1876 at the Centennial Exhibition in Philadelphia. There London's Royal School of Needlework displayed designs by William Morris and his peers. During the next four decades the ideals embodied in these designs were to permeate the nation, though taking on a particularly American slant. There was no single leader with stature comparable to William Morris in this country. Instead, a diverse group of influential crusaders spread the Arts and Crafts ideals across America through their work, lectures and writings: Gustav Stickley, a furnituremaker in Syracuse, New York; Elbert Hubbard, founder of Roycroft, an Arts and Crafts community in East Aurora, New York; Louis Comfort Tiffany, a stained glass artist in New York City; Frank Lloyd Wright, Chicago's developer of the Arts and Crafts-inspired Prairie School of architecture; ceramists Mary Louise McLaughlin, originator of underglaze decoration and Marie Longworth Nichols, founder of the Rookwood Pottery, both from Cincinnati, and Adelaide Robineau, creator of fine porcelain work with excised decoration, from Syracuse; Candace Wheeler, interior designer and one of the original partners with Tiffany in the New York firm of Associated Artists; and Clara Barck Welles, metalsmith and founder of the Kalo Shop in Chicago. They were aided in their task by numerous magazines which championed the Arts and Crafts cause. Most notable among these were *The Craftsman* published by Stickley, *The Philistine* published by Hubbard, and *Keramic Studio* published by Robineau and her husband Samuel, as well as the *Ladies Home Journal, House Beautiful* and *House and Garden.* In many cities Arts and Crafts guilds were formed to promote the movement's philosophies and to inform and instruct its members.

American Arts and Crafts designers, while stylistically influenced by Europe and Japan, were united in their desire to develop a truly American art. This led to a revival of early American crafts. In the spirit of nationalism, craftsmen turned to indigenous materials, using local oak instead of imported mahogany, and American motifs, such as native plants and animals. In addition, American Indian designs were studied and incorporated in this newly emerging style.

Rather than looking to medieval times as William Morris had done, furnituremaker Gustav Stickley urged Americans to draw inspiration from early pioneer days, when the taste for luxury and artificiality had not yet become ingrained. In his book *Craftsman Homes,* Stickley observed "that we should have in our homes something better suited to our needs and more expressive of our character as a people than imitations of [European] styles." He criticized British Arts and Crafts furniture as being primarily an expression of individuality, an expression of art for art's sake that had little to do with satisfying the plain needs of the people. "Any [American] style

Opposite page: Elizabeth E. Copeland, *Casket,* silver and enamel, 2⅛ x 5⅛ x 3⅜". Photo: George M. Cushing, Jr.; Courtesy: Gebelein Silversmiths. This piece was stolen in Boston in 1973 and was not recovered. **Above:** Buffalo Art Crafts Shop, Buffalo, NY, established about 1905 by Otto L. Heintz, *Jewel Casket,* copper, enamel, felt lining, c. 1900–1915, 4¾ x 9 x 6¼". Virginia Carroll Crawford Collection, High Museum of Art, Atlanta, GA. Photo: Helga Photo Studio

in architecture or furniture would have to possess the essential qualities of simplicity, durability, comfort and convenience and to be made in such a way that the details of its construction can be readily grasped."

In 1898, the same year Stickley traveled extensively in Europe, he founded the Gustav Stickley Company, a furniture manufacturing firm, which exemplified these principles. As a boy he had learned stonemasonry from his father and furnituremaking from an uncle.[4] Because he found it was "so easy to disguise bad lines with cheap ornamentation," Stickley's furniture designs were based upon the simplest and most direct principles of construction. The popularity of his furniture enabled him to establish franchises from coast to coast.

From 1901 to 1916 Stickley published *The Craftsman* magazine, a vehicle for expressing his views on all aspects of the Arts and Crafts life, discussing both social and esthetic matters. One of his readers must surely have

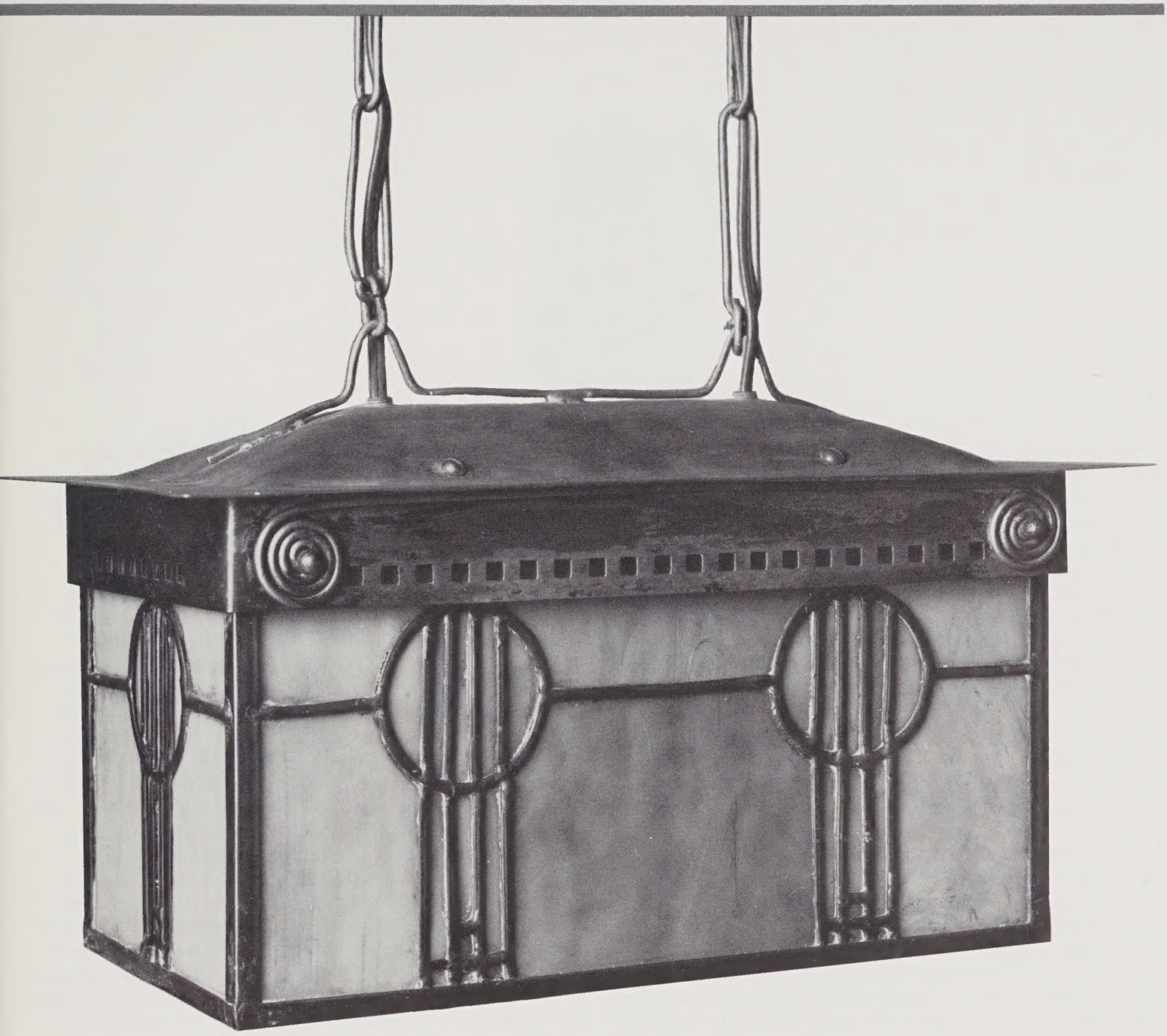
been the architect Frank Lloyd Wright whose Prairie style was clearly influenced by Stickley's ideas and furniture designs. As a proponent of the Arts and Crafts Movement, Wright designed homes which unified interior and exterior, used natural materials and had an overall quality of simplicity. The furniture, metalwork and stained glass he designed for these homes were akin to Stickley's style in their emphasis on geometric, rectilinear lines.

Out of necessity, both Stickley and Wright developed a business acumen, a trait that practical-minded Americans injected into the Arts and Crafts Movement. While William Morris, son of a banker, was supported by a private income, his American counterparts rarely enjoyed the same advantage. Undoubtedly, the most commercially astute American Arts and Crafts proponent was Elbert Hubbard, founder of the Roycroft community.

In 1894, after abandoning a successful career as a soap salesman, Hubbard founded the Roycroft Press, adopting as his motto "not how cheap, but how good." Earlier that year he had journeyed to England where he met William Morris and learned firsthand of the Arts and Crafts Movement. Like Morris's Kelmscott Press, the Roycroft Press produced hand-printed books, on handmade paper, using old style type. One of its most successful products was *The Philistine* magazine, Hubbard's controversial forum for his simplistic version of Morris's ideals. At its height the circulation of this monthly magazine filled with homespun homilies was over 200,000. The success of the Press eventually prompted Hubbard to open a furniture and leather shop, a metals shop and an inn on his Roycroft campus. Neither an artist nor designer himself, Hubbard had a remarkable ability to attract talented artisans. Dard Hunter and Karl Kipp were two of his most accomplished designers. The former, inspired by an issue of *The Philistine,* left Ohio State University and came to Roycroft where he designed furniture, metalwork, leaded glass and books. In 1908 Kipp deserted a career in banking to join forces with Hubbard.[5] As head of Roycroft's copper shop, he designed functional objects characterized by a noble simplicity. The quality of Roycroft products was complemented by Hubbard's entrepreneurial genius. He was the first to exploit mass advertising via *The Philistine* to sell craft products of esthetic value.[6] During peak years Hubbard employed over 500 people to meet public demand for Roycroft products.

At the opposite end of the philosophical spectrum from Stickley and Hubbard was Louis Comfort Tiffany, son of the founder of Tiffany and Company jewelers. While the latter unabashedly made luxury items for the rich, the former was involved with making utilitarian objects to meet "the needs of the people." Like all Arts and Crafts proponents, however, Tiffany frequently used American motifs and was concerned with the nature of materials and the importance of process. His prime interests were stained glass windows and decorative glass vases, but his firm, Tiffany Studios, also produced a large variety of decorative accessories including lamps, desk sets, plaques and containers. His studio employed several women who made important contributions in the field of metalwork. Patty Gay and Julia Munson, working out of Tiffany's home in New York City, managed a small female staff experimenting with enamels. Impressed with the work of Lalique, Tiffany encouraged these women to produce enamels with an iridescence and vitality that would rival faceted gems. Another female metalworker, just beginning her training, devised a unique method for cushioning her sheet of metal while doing repoussé work. It is said that Tiffany preferred the results of the new technique, created by this unnamed woman, to those of the professionally trained Englishman sitting beside her.[7]

It was not only in Tiffany's studio that women played a role in the Arts and Crafts Movement. In America, the movement was especially fueled by socially prominent women studying china painting in Cincinnati, Ohio.[8] Perhaps this was inevitable: Since Arts and Crafts ideals found expression in the home interior, the traditional domain of women, many of the crafts upon which this philosophy was based could easily be practiced by women at home. It would be misleading, however, to represent the Arts and Crafts Movement as a golden age of women's liberation. Gustav Stickley found that the significance of the Arts and Crafts ideals to women was in minimizing their housework. He assured women that "The idea that housekeeping means drudgery is partly due to our fussy, artificial, overcrowded way of living and partly to our elaborate houses and to inconvenient arrangements." It is likely that his views on woman as homemaker were consistent with majority thinking. In *Craftsman Homes* he explained that "Woman is above all things the homemaker and our grandmothers were not far wrong when they taught their daughters that a woman who could not keep house, and do it well, was not



Dard Hunter, design, Karl Kipp, execution, commissioned from Roycroft Inn, East Aurora, NY, *Hanging Lantern,* copper with leaded, green marbelized glass, 9 x 14⅞ x 8¾". Photo courtesy: The Roycroft Inn

making of her life the success that could reasonably be expected of her, nor was she doing her whole duty by her family."

Stickley's views notwithstanding, the presence of women in ceramics and textiles and to a lesser degree in metalwork, was pervasive and their influence substantial. The art pottery movement, so dominated by females, began in Cincinnati in 1874 when several upper-class women enrolled in a china painting class at The School of Design. These amateurs were sufficiently proficient by 1876 to display their work in the Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition.[9] There they were exposed to William Morris's Arts and Crafts embroidery as well as European innovations in ceramics, especially underglaze painting. Intrigued and inspired by what they had seen, they began experimenting with various techniques upon returning to Cincinnati. One of these women, Mary Louise McLaughlin, was the first American to develop a method

for producing underglaze decoration. Years later she pioneered a technique for creating hard-paste decorative porcelain which she named Losanti ware. Her rival, Marie Longworth Nichols founded the Rookwood Pottery in 1880 with the financial aid of her father. Nine years later, its financial success was assured when the Rookwood Pottery received a gold-medal in the Paris Exposition. While most women art potters cast their pieces from molds, Adelaide Robineau was one of the few who actually threw all her own work. Her high-fired porcelain was reknown for its delicate incised decoration and superb glazes.[10]

The Philadelphia Centennial Exhibition also played a decisive role in the life of Candace Wheeler. Inspired by the exhibition of Arts and Crafts embroidery from the Royal School of Art Needlework, she joined five others in founding the New York Society of Decorative Art. Along with the traditional Arts and Crafts ideals, this group espoused the radical notion that work and creativity were a necessary part of women's psychic well-being. They encouraged women to take up embroidery as a profession, "not indeed to prevent starvation of the body, but to comfort the souls of women who pined for independence . . . From what was perhaps a social and mental, rather than a physical, want, grew the great remedy of a resuscitation of one of the valuable arts of the world, a woman's art."[11] In 1879 Louis Comfort Tiffany asked Wheeler to become a fourth partner in a design firm. The goal of this new business, Associated Artists, was to produce artistic and unified interior decoration. In her new role, Wheeler became one of the first female interior decorators, opening this profession to countless women in future generations. Wheeler supervised the production and design of embroideries, needle-woven tapestries and loom weaving.[12] Although the firm dissolved in 1883, Wheeler kept its name and continued to create designs for interiors. Like other Arts and Crafts followers, she emphasized American motifs—indigenous flora and fauna, traditional patchwork and American Indian designs.

Just as women hobbyists in Cincinnati were attracted to china painting, metalsmithing was the craft frequently chosen as a pastime by upper class women in Chicago. And, as in Cincinnati, some of these amateurs eventually became innovative professionals. Many learned their craft at Hull House, founded by Jane Addams in 1889 following her visit to Charles Ashbee's guild and school in London. Founded as a settlement house to help the new immigrant population, Hull House had an art gallery and offered classes in various crafts for Addams believed that art was an essential part of life. She felt the absence of art was as harmful as the lack of food or clothing.[13]

The Art Institute of Chicago also played a leading role in promoting the Arts and Crafts Movement both through craft courses and its annual exhibitions of decorative arts. One of its graduates Clara Barck Welles opened the Kalo Shop in 1900, specializing in jewelry and holloware. It is likely that she was inspired by Charles Ashbee and Walter Crane when both prominent British Arts and Crafts enthusiasts lectured at the Art Institute. While her early work strongly resembled Ashbee's, she soon developed a style of her own characterized by soft curves and a gently rounded look. The motto she adopted for her Chicago shop, "Beautiful, Useful and Enduring," was reflected in her finely crafted, elegantly simple pieces. In true Arts and Crafts tradition, metalworking became both a profession and a lifestyle to Welles. She devoted as much time to her mostly female staff, hired to meet the growing demand for her work, as to their products. Besides supervising apprentices, she taught classes in the Kalo workshop to beginners, hoping to give women an opportunity to become metalsmiths. Many of these neophytes eventually were employed by Welles. Amidst all this activity, her business and her work flourished. Her pieces were frequently exhibited at the Art Institute and in 1937 the Metropolitan Museum of Art included her work in a show of contemporary design. Critics described her work as "freshly creative," "definitely her own" and "emphatically American."[14]

Clara Barck Wells, like other Arts and Crafts practitioners, believed in Morris's basic concept that people who took pride and pleasure in their work would eventually create a better world. Perhaps it was this idealistic belief, coupled with the Arts and Crafts tendency to look backward for inspiration rather than toward the future for growth, that caused this movement to fade. With the coming of World War I and industrialization firmly entrenched in society, the faith that a better society could be created through handcrafted objects seemed both naive and impractical. As a way of life the Movement waned, but not before making generous contributions to the craft tradition in America.

Opposite page: Clara B.Welles, The Kalo Shop, Chicago, IL, *Water Pitcher,* silver. Collection: The St. Louis Art Museum, Gift of David A. Hanks in honor of Allen Wardwell. **Above:** Buffalo Art Crafts Shop, *Candlestick,* copper with enamel decoration, 8⅜" h., ca. 1905. Photo: Courtesy Frisse; Collection: D.P. Magner Antiques, Brooklyn, NY

Notes

1. Anthea Callen, *Women Artists of the Arts and Crafts Movement,* (New York: Pantheon, 1979), p. 214.
2. *Ibid.,* p. 153.
3. *Ibid.,* p. 154.
4. Robert Judson Clark, ed., *The Arts and Crafts Movement in America 1876-1916,* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1972), p. 38.
5. *Ibid.,* p. 44.
6. *Ibid.,* p. 45.
7. *Ibid.,* p. 23.
8. Edward Lucie-Smith, *The Story of Craft,* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981), p. 221.
9. Callen, op. cit., p. 78.
10. *Ibid.,* p. 85.
11. *Ibid.,* p. 129.
12. *Ibid.,* p. 131.
13. Sharon S. Darling, *Chicago Metalsmiths,* (Chicago: Chicago Historical Society, 1977), p. 36.
14. *Ibid.,* p. 55.

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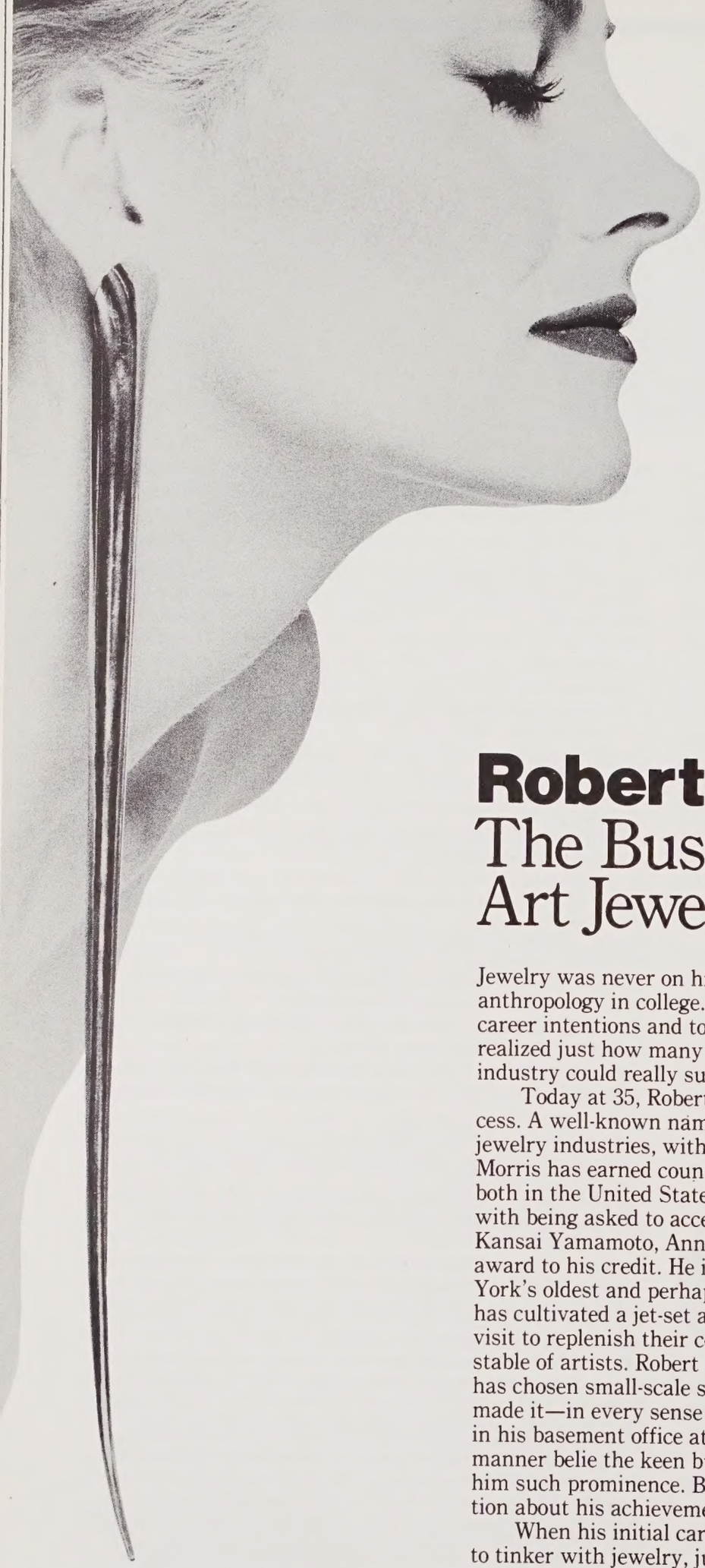
Examples of Arts and Crafts products are currently on display in the traveling exhibition, "The Arts and Crafts Movement in New York State (1890s–1920s)," organized by Dr. Coy Ludwig and sponsored by The Gallery Association of New York State. The tour schedule is as follows: Margaret Woodbury Strong Museum, Rochester, NY (November 17, 1983–February 24, 1984); Tyler Art Gallery, State University of NY at Oswego (March 4-April 12, 1984); The Hudson River Museum, Yonkers, NY (May 13–July 8, 1984); Buffalo and Erie County Historical Society, Buffalo, NY (July 19–August 20, 1984); Hood Museum of Art, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire (September 8–October 21, 1984); The Parrish Art Museum, Southampton, NY (November 25, 1984–January 4, 1985); Everson Museum of Art, Syracuse, NY (January 18–March 10, 1985); Herbert F. Johnson Museum, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY (May 15–June 23, 1985); New York State Museum, Albany, NY (July 27–October 20, 1985).

A catalog for this show is available for $15.00 from: Peregrine Smith Books, P.O. Box 667, Layton, UT 84041. ■



Robert Lee Morris: The Business of Marketing Art Jewelry

by Vanessa Lynn

Jewelry was never on his mind—at least not while he was studying art and anthropology in college. It was filmmaking which claimed his most serious career intentions and to which Robert Lee Morris committed himself, until he realized just how many others had made the same choice and how few the industry could really support.

Today at 35, Robert Lee Morris remains a little startled at his own success. A well-known name in the art community as well as in the fashion and jewelry industries, with his bold, sleek and highly imaginative collections Morris has earned countless editorial pages in every major fashion publication both in the United States and abroad. He has received the accolades that come with being asked to accessorize the new lines of such fashion luminaries as Kansai Yamamoto, Anne Klein and Calvin Klein. He has a coveted Coty award to his credit. He is owner and spokesman for Artwear, one of New York's oldest and perhaps best known avant-garde jewelry galleries. Here he has cultivated a jet-set and star-studded clientele, whose members repeatedly visit to replenish their collections of trendsetting jewelry by Morris and his stable of artists. Robert Lee Morris is an internationally acclaimed artist, who has chosen small-scale sculpture for the body as his medium. He has clearly made it—in every sense of the word—in the world of jewelry design. Sitting in his basement office at Artwear, his youthful good looks and personable manner belie the keen business acumen and artistic savvy that have gained him such prominence. But the directness with which he approaches conversation about his achievements more than hints at his intensity.

When his initial career direction in college dissolved, Morris ". . . began to tinker with jewelry, just as a whim, with nothing serious in mind, whatsoever." At the time he was studying sculpture with George Garner at Beloit

College in Wisconsin. Morris remembers, "He was a very macho man . . . the epitome of the welder and the man who could lift a crucible of molten steel. He was the man who taught me that jewelrymaking is not necessarily a feminine or weak thing, or a frivolous, decorative thing." In his spare time Garner used to use metal sculpture techniques such as welding to create jewelry. His pieces had a strong influence on Morris. "They were so direct . . . there was no separation between his jewelry and his sculpture. It looked the same. It had the same integrity. It was just scale. And I felt, well, if this man could do it, I could do it too!"

Morris completed his years in Wisconsin, living on a commune, experimenting with and selling, his jewelry. When the commune burned down shortly after his graduation, he took up a friend's invitation to move to Vermont. During the long, cold winter, he taught his friend everything he had taught himself about jewelrymaking. Together they opened a small shop to provide some income.

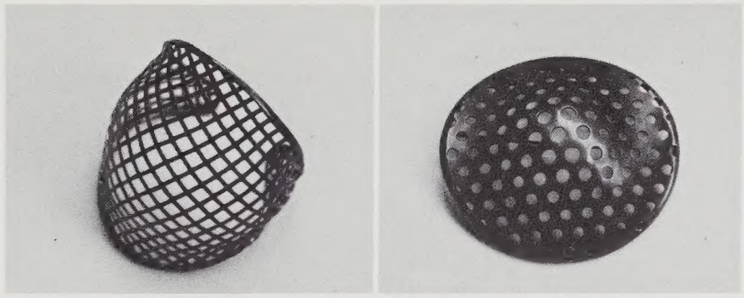
It was a transitional period for the artist, but a valuable one. "The more I experimented, the more I felt that all that I learned from art history and studio art could be funneled into this one new medium—jewelry. It seemed that I really could make and sell jewelry. So I kept on with it until I got to a point where I was able to really start to let my personality come out in my jewelry."

This idea has continued to be one of Morris' critical, creative tenets. He feels that he has the capacity to express himself in his jewelry designs ". . . as fluently as any singer, writer or any other artist. I can express everything that I sense about the world—politics, economics, history, the relationships between cultures. All of that I am able to put into my jewelry. And it's very, very satisfying—a very good feeling. With every collection I do, I just open new doors for myself. That's why I decided to get into, and stay with, jewelry once I got going."

In 1971, Morris's work was seen by an owner of Sculpture to Wear, an exclusive gallery located in New York City's Plaza Hotel. It featured one-of-a-kind and limited-edition pieces by some of the giants of contemporary art. When he was first contacted by the gallery, Morris was not even aware that it existed. But his first encounter proved critical, for it not only crystallized his own artistic vision, but also portended his own future.

Morris speaks of being mesmerized by the work shown at Sculpture to Wear. In the jewelry designed by Picasso, Man Ray, Nevelson, Calder and Snelson, he was struck by the same level of artistic integrity that marked the work of his college sculpture teacher. "I saw that the essence of the artists' work as I knew it had been successfully translated into wearable form. And the wearable form was so much more intimate than a painting. The fact that you could caress it, wear it, sleep with it, bathe with it, made it a more immediate and satisfying art form for me. The day I walked in there, I realized that this was really 'it.'"

But he also realized something which would serve him well when Sculpture to Wear closed in 1977, and Morris found nobody else in New York willing to take a chance retailing his wildly innovative designs. "I realized that the potential was wide open. It was really exciting to think about the possibility of continuing the development of contemporary art jewelry. Many of the artists represented by Sculpture to Wear were dead or dying. I realized that we had to have new people who were not doing jewelry as an after dinner exercise, or just as a part-time off-the-cuff thing with their friends, but who were doing it as their vocation, their main direction as an artist.



Opposite page: *Tusk Earring*
Perforated Disc Pin; Square Grid Alpha Cuff, gun metal

Thus it occurred to Morris to open his own gallery to show both his own work and that of other young "professional jewelry artists." He was undaunted by the fact that the gallery closest to his concept had been forced to close its doors. From his contact with, and observation of, this operation, he surmised that it would have succeeded if it had had greater commitment from its owners (who lived in another city) and a truly knowledgeable and aggressive sales force. Morris was sure he could provide his venture with both.

Instead of seeing it as a major setback, Morris took the closing of his best sales outlet as the impetus for his next triumph. Taking every penny he'd saved, a $20,000 loan, and the strength of his beliefs, Robert Lee Morris opened Artwear in 1977. There were difficult times, there was struggle, there was a false start off Madison Avenue. But in August 1978, Morris finally moved Artwear to its proper and present place in the burgeoning art scene of New York's Soho district.

The philosophy of Robert Lee Morris's jewelry design and that of Artwear are nearly synonymous. He calls his work, and that of his stable—Stephan Allendorf, Cara Croninger, Douglas Ferguson, Carol Motty, Ted Muehling, Jessica Rose, Yukihiro Shibata, Sachiko Uozumi, Laurence de Vries, Steve Vaubel and Tone Vigeland—"statement jewelry." It appeals to clients who are sure of themselves, who want a strong personal look and who are not afraid of the vibrant, sculptured pieces that are the hallmark of Morris's taste. Because he manages the gallery and is often on the selling floor, he is in close touch with his customers, many of whom are creative people—even frustrated artists—with no other outlet to express themselves. They purchase jewelry at Artwear to fill this need, to find a "signature look." Customers soon learn to appreciate that the often hefty price tags do not buy gold or precious stones at Artwear. In fact they buy acrylic or bronze or rubber or silver—materials that are secondary to the fact that what the purchase really obtains is an artist's statement and the opportunity for the buyer to be personally involved with that statement.

Morris sees the designs of his own collections as a metaphoric vocabulary. His ongoing studies in cultural anthropology remain a continual source of inspiration. This is most apparent in the collection of this past year, for which he readily acknowledges the influence of North and South American and oriental cultures. Each piece becomes a kind of symbolic letter form, manipulated by him to induce an esthetic, emotional response which fits and works with previous letters. He elaborates: "When

Multitexture Cross Belt, 1984, spring

you assemble a broad group of my work, you can start to see the foundations of what might be a universal language. What fascinates me is the possibility of creating a body of jewelry that is not only timeless, but also information-giving. The hope is that when you look at my work, you don't get a sense that it is simply decorative art. The idea is to receive from it a level of information and emotion and story-telling that is not apparent in most traditional jewelry. I'm not at all interested in the decorative—I never have been. In fact, Artwear is based on that principle—that it has to have a concept—that is the foremost quality. The basic form has to have strength and meaning way before there is surface decoration. The only exception is if the surface decoration is the content and the form. But that is rarely the case."

It is usual for an art gallery to represent a group of artists whose work shares an underlying, unifying esthetic. It is more unusual for a jewelry gallery to do so, although with Morris's strong art background, it is not unexpected. What is finally startling is Morris's acknowledgment that neither he, nor his stable, were ever trained as jewelry designers. And in realizing this fact, he revels in it. It becomes a kind of confirmation that what he promotes is art in the form of body accessory. Some of his artists found their way to established career roads, and several are now called upon to teach in university programs, but none, he maintains, started out there. Thinking about it prompts some further discourse on academia.

Morris feels there is a major dichotomy between general trends and the work that continues to emerge from the university environment. It is hard to argue with his feeling that the kind of work he has been promoting has had a major impact on commercial jewelry trends. The high fashion publications—*Vogue, Harper's Bazaar, Women's Wear Daily, The New York Times Fashion Supplements*—have all been generously featuring his artists in editorial pages for the past six years. Certainly mass market firms like Monet and Trifari have made their own product designs bolder in response to the Artwear presence. Dut to continuing interest Morris predicts an even wider influence over the next five years. Yet, he feels the work emerging from the major schools with jewelry design programs eschews the public in favor of an academic approach. He feels students are so heavily pressured to master technique that they often forfeit an interest in, and thus an understanding of, good design. He reiterates this in his many lectures to jewelry students: "For every hour you spend learning technique, you should be learning jewelry history and jewelry design. But, in addition, you should be visiting museums, visiting not only art collections but Museum of Natural History collections, Museum of Man collections. You should be reading fashion magazines and generally seeing what's happening on the streets, in real life."

Morris makes time for these crusading efforts; he feels he has an obligation to "open up the minds of jewelry students on a much broader level than just how to make jewelry. I want them to open up their minds about what they really want to say—and then they can talk about how they want to do it."

He is genuine about the contribution he wishes to make to the development of young artists. He has found a way of combining his need to keep abreast of their work with his desire to help them. When Artwear is closed to the public on Sunday, Morris maintains an open-door policy for any designer who wishes to see him. He will offer a frank critique of their ideas. From his point of view, he finds many people who should not be making jewelry, and he will tell them so. If he finds quality work that doesn't fit his gallery, he will offer suggestions about other outlets. But if he finds people who are on the track, he will work with them, cultivate them. And of course, there are rare occasions when he happens upon "genius," and offers an artist an immediate opportunity.

Artwear's "statement jewelry" appeals to clients who are sure of themselves, who want a strong personal look and who are not afraid of vibrant, sculptured pieces.

Those artists who do become part of the permanent stable are now also offered the opportunity to have Morris handle their wholesaling operation. Clearly this can be in the best interest of the gallery as well as the individual, but the practice originated in Morris's response to specific requests from his exhibitors, which at first he was reluctant to satisfy. "In the beginning I wanted Artwear to be strictly like Sculpture to Wear—limited-edition, one-of-a-kind pieces and only retail. I thought wholesaling was very degrading to the image of art." But he found himself pressured by some of his own artists, who wanted to broaden their exposure and increase their sales. Since he seemed capable of doing it for himself, some of the artists argued that all parties could benefit by the centralizing of their wholesale accounts. In fact, Morris feels it took a long time for him to learn how to properly approach and sell to many sources. He actually had to help stores educate their own customers about the work, particularly outside New York. But now, their reordering is often automatic, and the wholesale sales figures rise considerably every year.

The "luck" that has come to Robert Lee Morris is hard won. The fact that he has written one million dollars in sales in the past year is due to a combination of tremendous perseverence and a great belief in his own ability and philosophy. Morris has monitored the developments of his own career, and that of Artwear, with great caution. Over the years, many opportunities have been offered to him that might have done a disservice to the Morris/Artwear image. Even when he was hungry—and there were lean years—his belief in his own concept kept him from jumping at compromising offers. Consequently, he can relate only one marketing experience which he views as a failure. This was the result of an offer to showcase his own work in New York City's successful West Side Boutique, Charivari. Morris originally seized the opportunity for several reasons. The increasingly affluent Upper West Side was a potential market that he was interested in learning more about, and, eventually, introducing to Artwear. He knew that Kansai Yamamoto was among the clothing designers carried by the store, so he felt that the clientele would be receptive to the Morris esthetic. Also, he was given a prominent window for display which allowed the use of one of Artwear's signature torso sculptures. The components all seemed right, except that Morris found out that the store didn't know how, or care to, merchandise the work properly. They never shined nor polished it, and whenever he visited his display, it was always marred by fingerprints. It was an upsetting experience, but an educational one. Morris now agrees to showcases in only the finest retail outlets such as Bloomingdale's, where he is able to maintain his high design standards.

Robert Lee Morris is a refreshingly satisfied individual. He is delighted with the niche he has carved for himself as an innovator and an entrepreneur. He speaks honestly about wishing there were others who would take the risk he did. "Competition is a really healthy thing. There just have to be more art jewelry galleries opening. If they are not opened by artists themselves, as cooperatives or private enterprises, they will be by wealthy individuals who realize that they can make a profit. I know that I could put together a list of 20 good jewelry designers that I would like to have at Artwear but just don't have the space or time to promote properly. And these artists could approach someone collectively. It's got to happen. It will just take a smart person to realize the potential and do it—to rent a space, fill the cases. I'm a good role model. People could just come here and see how I operate. All they have to do is do the same thing, and they would be successful."

Of course, Morris still makes it sound much easier than it is, but his belief in the need and value of other galleries is genuine. He is pleased that at least two others Byzantium and Detail have opened in SoHo. In fact, he was instrumental in introducing the latter to New York. This evolved out of Morris's commitment to bring the work of European jewelers to the United States. He knew of the original Detail in London. Impressed with its designs, he invited the owner to put together the work of these British artists for an exhibit at Artwear. The show's immediate success here suggested that a New York-based Detail would meet with a similar reaction. Morris not only convinced the owner of this, but also actually found his Spring Street location. Detail has been there for three years, and Morris is still delighted to have such visionary competition only three blocks away.

No matter how carefully one attempts to analyze the components of a successful business, there are always factors which defy classification. In the case of Robert Lee Morris, it is likely that Morris himself provides that undefinable element—a talent, a savvy, a highly innovative jewelry design concept. But although he has broken the ground, he leaves much room for exploration and expansion by others with similar conviction and determination. ■

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Photographic Images on Refractory Metals

by Marilyn Shaw

Marilyn Shaw, *My Brother and Me*
necklace, columbium, plastic, 1982

The following article explains photo techniques used to transfer images onto refractory metals. These findings were developed during my graduate studies at California State University, Long Beach, California.

Traditionally photo resists have been used as a masking agent in the chemical etching of metals. While working with the electrolytic coloration of refractory metals, I became frustrated with the lack of control I had over the images which were produced through masking areas with tape, nail polish and so on. With the initial problem of producing colored lettering on titanium, I thought of using photo resists as a masking agent, and it has since proven to be an effective way to produce virtually any image that can be transferred to a negative.

Although I have used Kodak Thin Film Resist (KTFR) for its ability to reproduce fine detail, other photo resists on the market will work in a similar manner. The descriptions of how to work with the photo resist liquid is kept brief. (More detailed information can be found in two excellent articles in the Fall and Summer 83 issues of Metalsmith, *"Photoetching for the Studio Jeweler.")*

Photo Resist Description

First the KTFR resist is applied to the metal in a liquid form which becomes a light-sensitive emulsion when it dries. This coated surface is then exposed by contact printing just like a piece of photographic film, and the exposed piece developed. The resist was left in the areas where the surface was exposed to light. Areas which the light did not strike were free of the resist.

After the resist is developed, it is used as a mask in electrolytic coloring of titanium or columbium. The resist prevents the electrolyte from contacting the surface of the metal. Thus the exposed areas of the metal can be colored at a particular voltage, and once the resist is removed, the areas previously covered can be colored at a lower voltage. This produces a bicolored image on the refractory metal.

The following article describes the processes used to produce successful results with KTFR resist. They were derived from guidelines in Kodak publications and through many experiments.[1]

Safety Precautions

Since resist chemicals all contain xylene, an oily, colorless, toxic, flammable liquid, several safety procedures should be followed when using it. First, it should be kept away from heat and flame. Second, since it may be narcotic if inhaled in high concentrations, a chemical respirator with organic vapor cartridges to filter the chemicals should be worn when working with the resist, developer or thinner.[2] The darkroom should also have an exhaust fan. As a further precaution, the dish used to develop the coated plates should have a cover to contain the fumes. Finally, because the resist chemicals are also harmful to the skin, heavy-duty neoprene gloves and safety glasses should be worn when working with the chemicals.

Cleaning Metal

The first cleaning step is very important. If not done properly, the resist will peel off during acid etching. The metal is initially sanded to remove oxides and scratches, then scrubbed with a small amount of water and cleanser and finally cleaned with detergent and ammonia. The metal is clean only when a continuous sheet of water can be maintained on its surface, indicating the absence of grease.

To completely clean the metal, it can also be electro-cleaned by being attached to the negative terminal of a D.C. generator and immersed in electro-cleaning solution. A stainless steel sheet is also attached to the positive terminal of the generator and immersed in the solution. The D.C. generator is turned on for a few seconds at 10 volts, after which the piece is removed and rinsed in water. To avoid transferring body oils to the metal, it should be handled by the edges only. It is then dried by compressed air or a blow-dryer and wrapped in paper until it is coated with resist at a later time.

Coating Metal with Resist

At this point, the photo resist work is done in a darkroom. Photo resists are sensitive to ultraviolet radiation and will be fogged by sunlight or normal red safelights. A yellow bug light was the only light source I used as a safelight when working with the KTFR resist.

The cleaned pieces of metal are coated with a diluted mixture of KTFR—one part KTFR and two parts KMER (Kodak Metal Etch Resist) thinner.[3] The metal is first brushed clear of dust particles with a photographic blower dust brush. The metal plate is held by the edges and a small amount of KTFR mixture poured on the plate. When the plate is rocked, the liquid resist spreads over the plate. The excess liquid is then poured off one corner, back into the bottle of diluted resist, leaving only a very thin coating of resist on the metal plate. Each plate is then either hung or propped up vertically over paper towels to be air dried for 10 to 15 minutes in the darkroom. The lowest edge of each plate collects a thicker coating of resist. Since this edge is not exposed to the same degree as the rest of the plate, the plate should be larger than is actually necessary and cut down later.

Prebaking

After the coated plates are air dried, they are baked to remove any residual solvents in the resist coating.[4] The prebaking operation is done by placing the coated plates on a wire-mesh screen over a Salton hot tray. The hot tray emits no light, but provides the correct amount of heat. The plates are in the darkroom for 20 minutes. After cooling, they are carefully wrapped to protect the resist from scratching and stored in a light-proof box to avoid exposure to sunlight, which would expose and ruin the resist.

Exposing

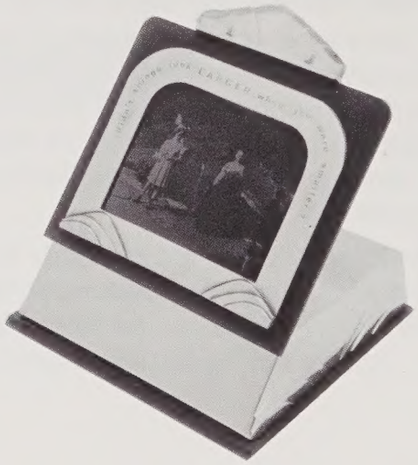
The exposure time for the coated plates depends on several factors: "The coating thickness, the retention of solvents within the resist layer, the nature of the surface upon which the resist is coated, and the spectral output of the exposing source."[5] All of these factors make experimentation necessary to determine the correct exposure time.

The exposure light source I used at California State University was a Nu-Arc Plate Maker equipped with a xenon light source. After experimentation I found that exposure times of 20 to 30 seconds were adequate. Other sources of ultraviolet light could have also been used, such as a black light.

Before each piece was exposed, it was dusted with a photographer's dust brush. The negative used was also brushed to remove dust particles. The glass on the Plate Maker was also cleaned before every exposure. The coated plate is then placed on the Plate Maker with the resist-coated side facing up. The negative is then placed on top of the plate with its emulsion side facing down. The glass is lowered and the vacuum turned on. The vacuum frame is then turned over to face the xenon light. The desired exposure time is set and the light turned on. After the plate is exposed, it is carefully stored in a light-proof box.

Negatives

Several types of negatives can be used



Marilyn Shaw, *Didn't Things Look Larger When You Were Smaller,* sterling silver, titanium, plastic, 1982

on the project pieces. The simplest type, used as a negative for lettering, is made with rub-down lettering (press type) on frosted Mylar. For other images, high-contrast, normal black-and-white negatives can be used. The high contrast is needed to properly expose the KTFR resist. Only very dense black areas of a negative will prevent the exposure light from exposing the resist. Gray areas of a negative will partially or fully expose the resist and usually produce an unclear image. If the negatives do not have enough contrast, they can be reexposed on Kodalith film which produces high-contrast images by eliminating gray areas in the original image. Many of the negatives used in my project were derived from my own black-and-white negatives. The high-contrast Kodalith negatives were then used to expose the photo-resist-coated plates.

A third type of negative is a halftone negative which can reproduce an original photograph with a continuous range of tones. On the halftone negative the tones of the original photograph are broken up into a series of small dots which are small enough to be merged by the human eye at a normal viewing distance, creating the illusion of a continuous tone. The dots are produced by projecting a continuous-tone negative through a screen with a pattern of gridded lines or a screen of vignetted dots. When the light passes through the screen it breaks up the image into a series of dots. The dots on the film vary in size depending on the amount of light passing through the original continuous-tone negative.[7] The halftones used on all of my pieces were made by a commercial graphic arts company with an 85-line-per-centimeter screen. However, the halftone used on the piece entitled *Me and My Brother* was made with a 120-line-per-centimeter screen.

Developing

The developer used for KTFR is KMER (Kodak Metal Etch Resist developer). It is extremely noxious and a respirator mask and heavy-duty gloves should be worn at all times when working with it. The developer, actually a solvent, dissolves the KTFR photo resist in areas where it is not hardened by exposure to ultraviolet light.

A covered glass dish is used to develop the exposed plates. About ½ inch of KMER developer is poured into the dish. The exposed plate is then placed in the developer with the coated side up. The cover is replaced on the dish and it is then gently rocked for three minutes. The plate is then removed and placed in a dish of water. The unexposed resist is removed by the water and the image appears at this time. Because the developer tends to soften all the resist, the image is very fragile. As a result, extreme care must be taken when handling the plate after development.

After this step, the plate can be exposed to normal light without affecting the image. It is then air dried. The developer should be stored in a separate container from unused developer and can be reused four to six times before being discarded.

Postbaking

Postbaking the developed plate helps the resist to adhere to the metal during acid etching. After development, the plate is placed on a wire-mesh screen above a Salton hot tray and left on it for 15 minutes. The resist should then be hard and ready to be colored electrolytically.

Coloring of Refractory Metals

When the photo resist is applied to the refractory metals, titanium or columbium, it is not intended to be an acid resist for etching. Instead, the photo resist is used as a mask for electrolytic coloring of the metals. The photographic image is developed through coloring of the metals rather than acid etching the image.

Titanium and columbium can be colored by the formation of oxides on the surface of the metal. The thickness of this oxide determines the color seen by the human eye. It is an effect created by an optical phenomenon known as interference, meaning that no dyes have been used to produce the colors.[8] Interference is simply the combination of waves of light which in turn produce different colors visible to the human eye.[9] These oxide layers can be formed by heating the metal or by electrical current.

The electrical coloring of titanium and columbium is achieved with a D.C. generator capable of producing voltage from zero to approximately 100 volts. Since this voltage is strong enough to kill the operator, strict safety procedures must be followed (discussed later in this section). The metal to be colored is attached to the positive terminal or anode, and another piece of stainless steel or titanium is attached to the negative terminal or cathode. Both pieces of metal are suspended, without touching each other, in a liquid capable of transferring current. The liquid or electrolyte I used was tap water with a few spoonfuls of ammonium sulfate fertilizer. The liquid is contained in a nonconductive material such as plastic or glass.

When the generator is turned on and voltage transmitted to the metal, oxygen is formed at the positive side or anode. The oxygen combines with the metal of the anode and forms an oxide film layer on the metal anode.[10] The thickness of this oxide film increases with higher voltage; therefore, different colors are produced by different voltages. For instance, titanium subjected to 20 volts will produce a purple color, while 50 volts will produce a light green color.

Once an area of a piece of titanium or columbium has been colored at a specific voltage, it can be immersed again in the electrolyte and subjected to a lower voltage. The first color produced by the higher voltage will remain unchanged and a second color will be produced (on previously uncolored areas) by the lower voltage.

To achieve several colors on one piece of metal, the highest voltage colors must be created first. The areas that are to be colored with a lower voltage must be masked from contact with the electrolyte. Masking can be easily done by using plastic tape or by painting the metal with a

non-water-soluble liquid such as nail polish. Both of these methods are effective but limited. For more detailed designs, photo resist can be used as a masking agent.

The previously described process for coloring is used when the titanium and columbium were coated with a photo-resist image. To insure good contact on the entire piece of metal, a rectangular, adjustable armature of titanium sheet is built. The piece to be colored is then clipped to this armature with plastic-coated spring-clips which gives metal to metal contact down both sides of the piece of metal. The armature is then hung in a five-gallon plastic bucket from plastic rods. A titanium cathode is similarly suspended in the other side of the bucket. The cathode is attached to the negative terminal by an alligator clip lead, and the armature holding the piece to be colored is attached by another alligator clip lead to the positive terminal.

The generator is then turned on and the voltage slowly increased to the highest voltage needed to color the metal. It is kept at this setting for only a few seconds, then turned off and unplugged. The metal is then removed and checked for the desired color. The exposed areas of the metal should be uniformly colored while the areas of metal covered by resist remain uncolored.

The piece is then removed from the armature and soaked in paint thinner which removes the photo resist and exposes the uncolored portion of the metal. The metal is then washed in water and detergent to remove the paint thinner.

The final coloring step is the oxidation of the areas of metal previously covered with photo resist. The piece of metal is again clipped to the armature and immersed in the electrolytic solution. The power leads are again attached, and the generator plugged into the wall socket. The current is turned on and slowly raised to the desired voltage, lower than the first voltage so as not to destroy the first color. When the piece is removed, it now has a two-color image. The metal is rinsed and dried with a blow-dryer. The colored titanium or columbium pieces can then be cut, shaped and attached to other materials to form various finished pieces.

Additional Safety Precautions

While using the D.C. generator, many safety procedures were followed. These are especially important because the voltage produced by the generator is strong enough to kill the operator. Rubber gloves and rubbersoled shoes are worn when operating the generator; the work piece electrolytic bath and wires are never touched while the power is on; as an added safety precaution, the generator is also unplugged before anything is removed from the solution; the work is always done on a wooden, rather than metal, table; and the work area is kept neat and free of pieces of metal or water which could conduct electricity.[11] All these precautions must be checked repeatedly while coloring many pieces of metal.

Conclusions

The most important considerations in using photo resists are cleanliness and safety. If the plate has not been sufficiently cleaned, the photo image can be ruined. It is even worth the effort to sand the plate with emery paper, using cleanser and electro-cleaning it. Also, after the metal is coated, it must be kept free of dust particles, which will otherwise be certain to appear on the finished piece. Do follow strict safety precautions when using the photo-resist chemicals and the D.C. generator.

The application of photo resists on refractory metals provides a way to control the images obtained on these metals. But one drawback to this technique is the health hazards involved with the photo-resist chemicals and the power supply. Perhaps other resists are less harmful than KTFR, but this area needs further investigation. Also, the equipment and darkroom facilities available to me as a student made some of my work easier. For instance, now that I no longer have access to that equipment, I am investigating using a black light source instead of the Xenon Plate Maker. All of which is to say that the individual studio jeweler will need to invest time and money to set up the proper equipment and work environment, which could even include a darkroom to produce transparencies.

I hope the information I obtained while experimenting with this process will be of value to others. But more to the point, I hope this technique will become not just another technique to master but a more creative way to express ideas on metal.

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10. Ward, "The Colouring and Working of the Refractory Metals," p. 2.
11. Linda Weiss, "Questions and Answers," *Metalsmith,* 2 (Winter, 1981-82), p. 53. ■

Marilyn Shaw lives in Long Beach, CA, where, since last year when she received her MA, she has been involved in setting up a studio at home to produce limited-production-line jewelry. She also holds a full-time job as a programmer/analyst.

by Gayle P. Miller

To Bryant Clark design is foremost, and the designs for his hand-crafted knives are created from his knowledge of history and tradition and from his observation and enjoyment of nature.

His involvement with historical projects is impressive and indicates the functional tendency of his art. While he was building his knifemaking business, Clark helped restore his family's circa 1750 house, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. He is currently restoring his own home of the same age and preparing his studio in a 1913 trolley car which had been used as a home since 1937. To round out his involvement in the American past, Clark once ran an antique shop where he repaired and restored antiques.

Although he could not find a degree program in knifemaking, Clark combined an education in sculpture and metalsmithing for knifemaking purposes. He received a BFA with Honors, majoring in sculpture, from the University of Delaware in 1977, spending equal amounts of time in photography, sculpture and jewelry. He then went on to achieve an MFA with Honors in 1980, in metalsmithing, from Tyler School of Art, while teaching metalsmithing and jewelry making at the Delaware Art Museum. As a student, he concentrated on knifemaking, at first sneaking back and forth between departments, since his professors preferred him to make either jewelry or sculpture.

A full-time knifemaker since 1980, Clark has shown his work in a number of galleries and juried craft shows. In the past year, he has won the Craftsman Award—voted by his peers—at the Lincoln Center Craft Show in New York City, a Third Place in the Washington, D.C. Craft Show and First Place and Best in Show Award from the Rehoboth (Delaware) Art League's Craft Show.

Bryant Clark
The Cutting Edge of Blade Design

Deco Knife, brass, acrylic, aluminum, high carbon steel, 8½x2½". Photo: Mel Evans

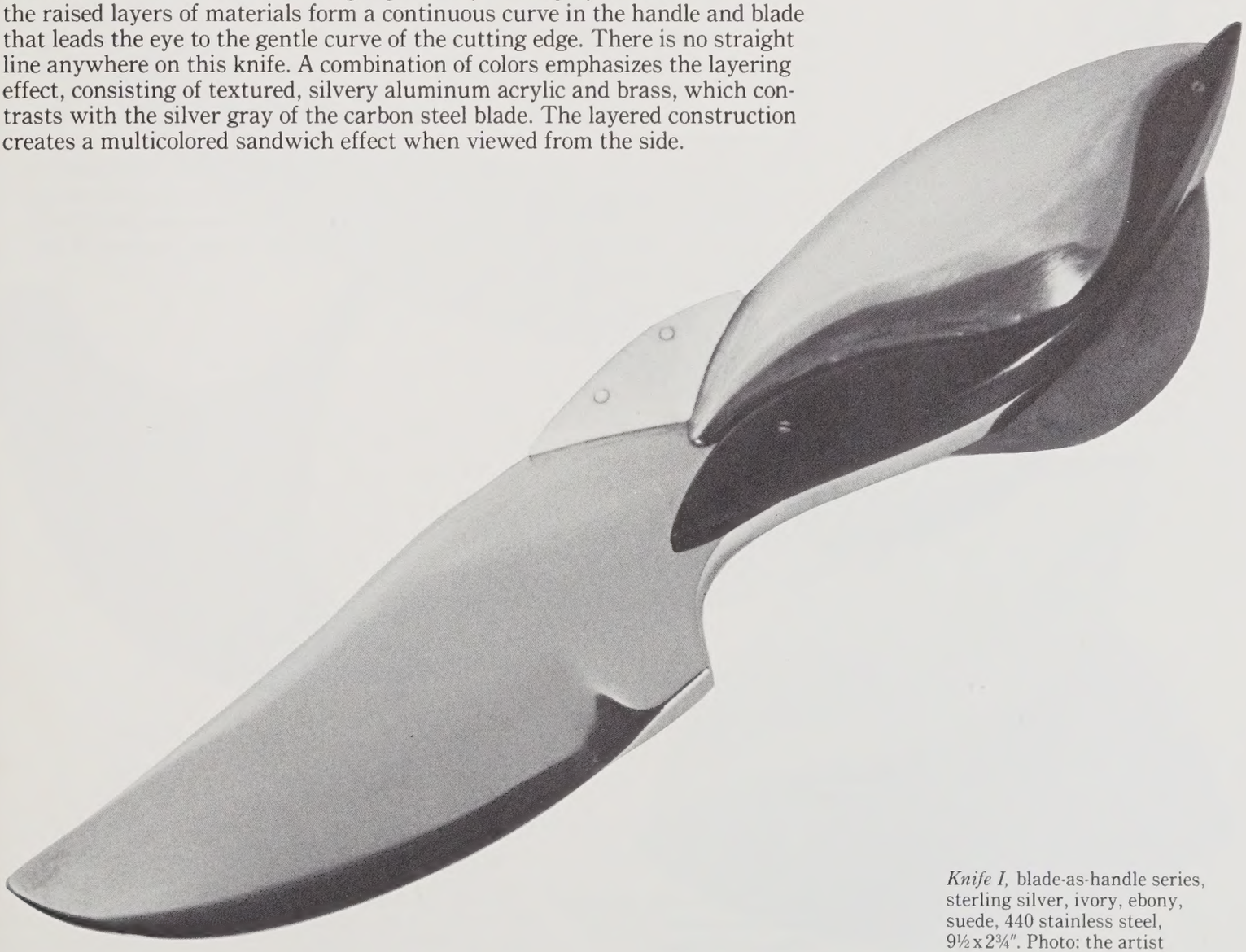
Gayle P. Miller is a freelance writer in Washington, D.C.

Although he still makes custom jewelry, Clark concentrates on knife-making, since, in his words, "This form allows me a virtually endless series of design and function combinations as well as an opportunity to work on an intimate scale. I use the materials and construction techniques I enjoyed in both sculpture and jewelry." Knives combine the senses of sight and touch in a single entity to a degree that jewelry and sculpture cannot, according to Clark. There is a closeness you can achieve with a knife since, unlike sculpture, it is small enough to handle, yet not as small as jewelry. Clark's knives have a feel, a balance, a tactile quality that can induce a sense of pleasure while they are being used.

Clark is satisfied that, because of his emphasis on design, his knives are artistic as well as functional. Nevertheless, he realizes that not everyone reacts to his knives as art. "When two people come by a show of mine, one sees sculpture and shape, the other sees knives." He feels if his knives were larger, people would know they were sculpture. Yet, Clark believes, "You have to be a good artist to make crafts. Take early American furniture—whether the furniture maker intended a chair to be art or not, it is nevertheless."

This is an apt example for Clark, since his work has been strongly influenced by the simplicity of early American designs and American primitive art. He creates his own sculptural designs out of the forms of nature—ocean waves and shell shapes, fish, sand dunes and snow drifts—simplified to their basic S-curves to produce smooth, flowing shapes. As Clark says, "Sophisticated people can still respond to simple shapes . . . because they can take them in in one look. There is a simple pleasure in basic shapes."

This is evident in Clark's work. His *Deco Knife* is more a small sculptural design than a functional knife. Although it can be used as a matt or razor knife, similar ones have been bought primarily for display. Like ocean waves, the raised layers of materials form a continuous curve in the handle and blade that leads the eye to the gentle curve of the cutting edge. There is no straight line anywhere on this knife. A combination of colors emphasizes the layering effect, consisting of textured, silvery aluminum acrylic and brass, which contrasts with the silver gray of the carbon steel blade. The layered construction creates a multicolored sandwich effect when viewed from the side.



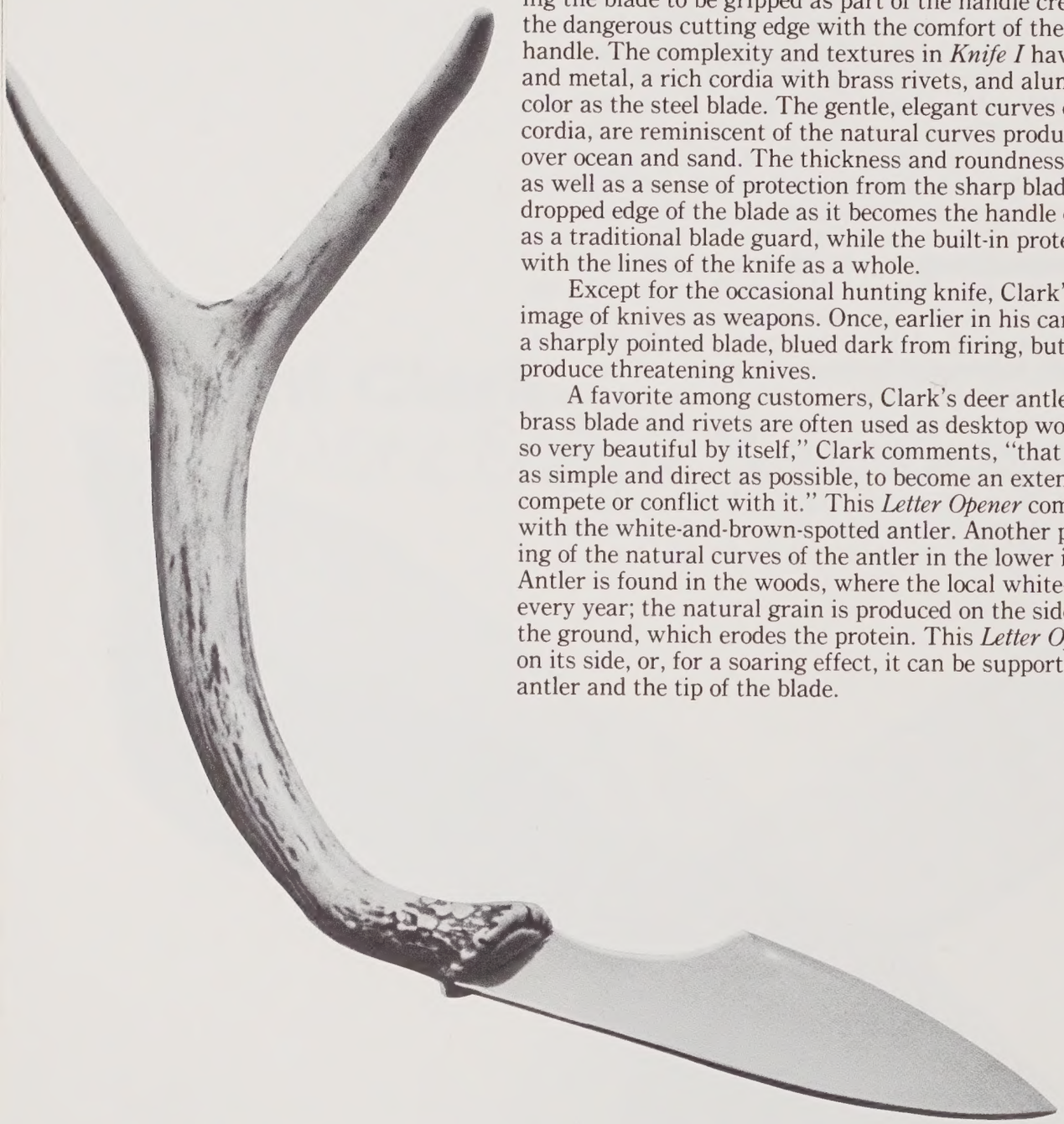
Knife I, blade-as-handle series, sterling silver, ivory, ebony, suede, 440 stainless steel, 9½x2¾". Photo: the artist

The curves of the *Deco Knife* become more exaggerated and complex in a subsequent series of knives where the exposed blade is incorporated into the handle, a design unique to Clark. In *Knife I,* the colors, textures and shapes are accentuated by the precious materials. The dominant piece on top—like a sparkling sand dune—is made of polished sterling silver, shaped by a masonite dieform. On the side, ebony creates a shadow effect beneath the sterling, while the material softest to the touch, gray suede, contrasts its rough surface to the smooth, hard silver and ebony. The raised ivory triangle atop the blade highlights the connection of handle and blade. The blade glides into the handle without benefit of a guard, the impeccably smooth 440 stainless steel of the blade and the sterling virtually extensions of one another.

Knife II shows a progression towards simplification and boldness. Allowing the blade to be gripped as part of the handle creates a tactile interplay of the dangerous cutting edge with the comfort of the thicker, blunt steel in the handle. The complexity and textures in *Knife I* have been distilled to wood and metal, a rich cordia with brass rivets, and aluminum almost the same color as the steel blade. The gentle, elegant curves of the steel, echoed in the cordia, are reminiscent of the natural curves produced by the wind blowing over ocean and sand. The thickness and roundness of the wood offer comfort as well as a sense of protection from the sharp blade. As to function, the dropped edge of the blade as it becomes the handle offers as much protection as a traditional blade guard, while the built-in protective curve is compatible with the lines of the knife as a whole.

Except for the occasional hunting knife, Clark's knives do not fit the image of knives as weapons. Once, earlier in his career, he experimented with a sharply pointed blade, blued dark from firing, but decided he did not want to produce threatening knives.

A favorite among customers, Clark's deer antler *Letter Openers* with brass blade and rivets are often used as desktop worry stones. "The antler is so very beautiful by itself," Clark comments, "that I choose to make my blade as simple and direct as possible, to become an extension of the antler and not compete or conflict with it." This *Letter Opener* combines the warm brass with the white-and-brown-spotted antler. Another pleasing touch is the echoing of the natural curves of the antler in the lower inset curve of the blade. Antler is found in the woods, where the local white-tailed deer shed them every year; the natural grain is produced on the side of the antler that lies on the ground, which erodes the protein. This *Letter Opener* is constructed to lie on its side, or, for a soaring effect, it can be supported on the two ends of the antler and the tip of the blade.



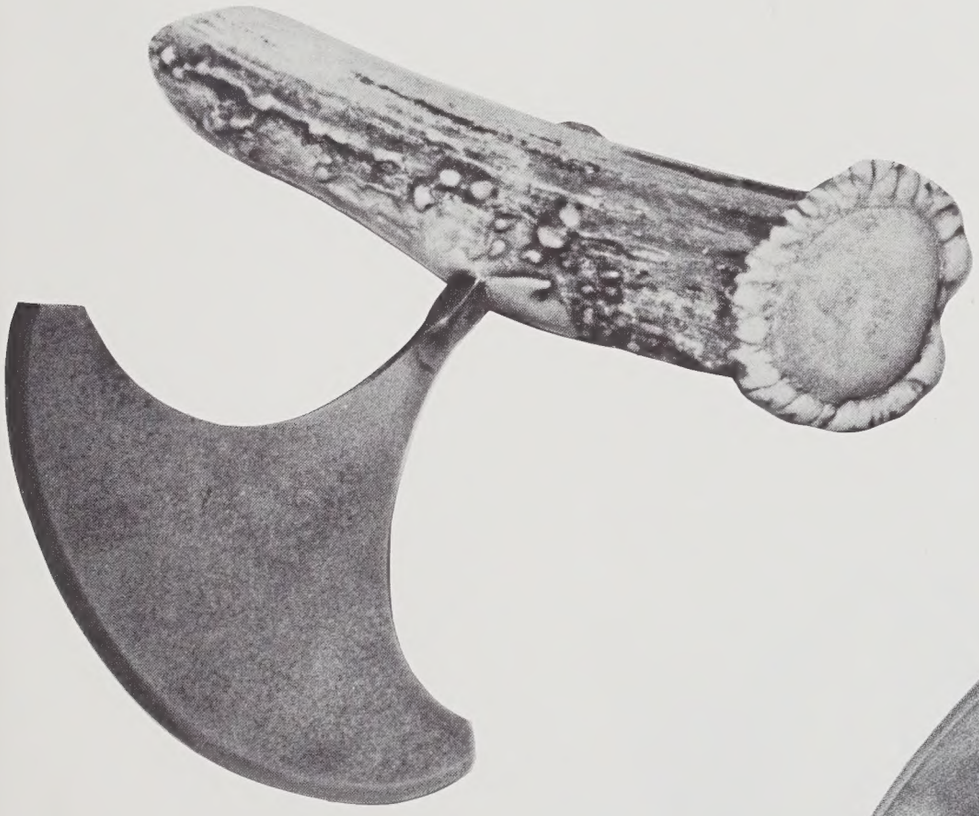
Letter Opener, work-hardened brass, deer antler, 18 x 1¼".
Photo: Mel Evans

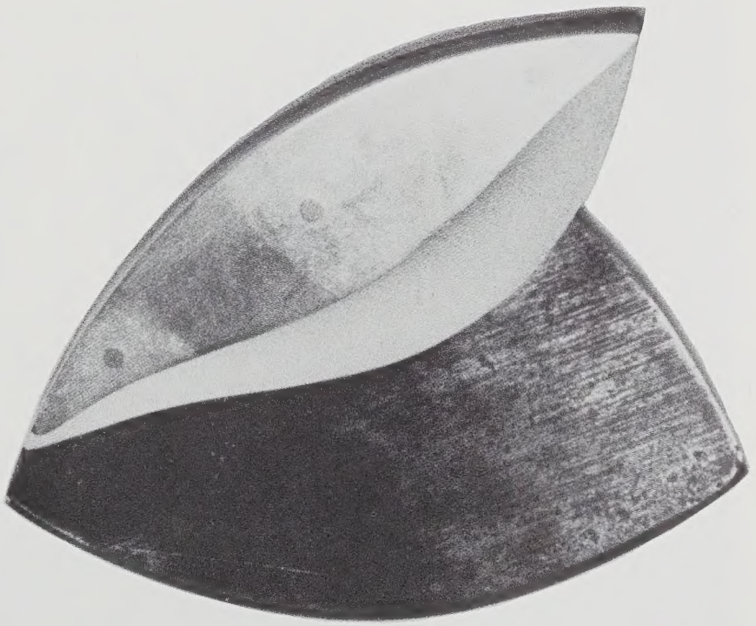
The traditional Eskimo *ulu,* used for chopping as well as eating food, inspired the blade of *Food Chopper I.* This blade shape is nearly universal, having been found in almost every early culture, perhaps in imitation of even earlier stonecutters. Whereas the *ulu* has a shorter neck, with the handle parallel to the blade, Clark's handle is at a 90 degree angle to the blade, and the neck is elegantly slender. The antler handle is highly polished to resemble ivory. In contrast to the *ulu's* textured blade, the edge of Clark's *Chopper* is clearly delineated by its extreme polish.

In his *ulu*-type knives, among others, Clark follows historical precedent by reusing good steel from older saws or files, often leaving the manufacturer's name on the blade to show its origin. Recycling a good blade is considered a mark of appreciation for the original toolmaker. The blade's texture will not alter with time since Clark cleans off the rust, reblues the blade to fill the rust pits and polishes it smooth.

Food Chopper II utilizes the *ulu* curve of the blade in a high-tech design unique to Clark. The blade is cut from an old saw, textured and blued. A matt-finished white acrylic shape is echoed in reddish bronze with a textured shine, while golden brass rivets produce a subtle color contrast to the bronze, accentuating the workmanship. Clark often uses soft pastel acrylic to emphasize the novelty of the design of similar knives. The fluid, graceful curves produce a leaflike or fish-fin effect. In use this chopper calls attention to its nontraditional qualities. If one assumes a blade usually points forward, then this knife is held backwards to obtain the proper rocking or chopping motion.

Bryant Clark willingly designs his knives with a variety of materials to provide color and texture. Yet, to fully appreciate the appeal of these knives, one must hold them; the heft in the hand, the comfort of the curved surfaces that encourage exploration delight in a tactile way. The deceptive simplicity of these small sculptures continues to surprise and challenge the senses. ■



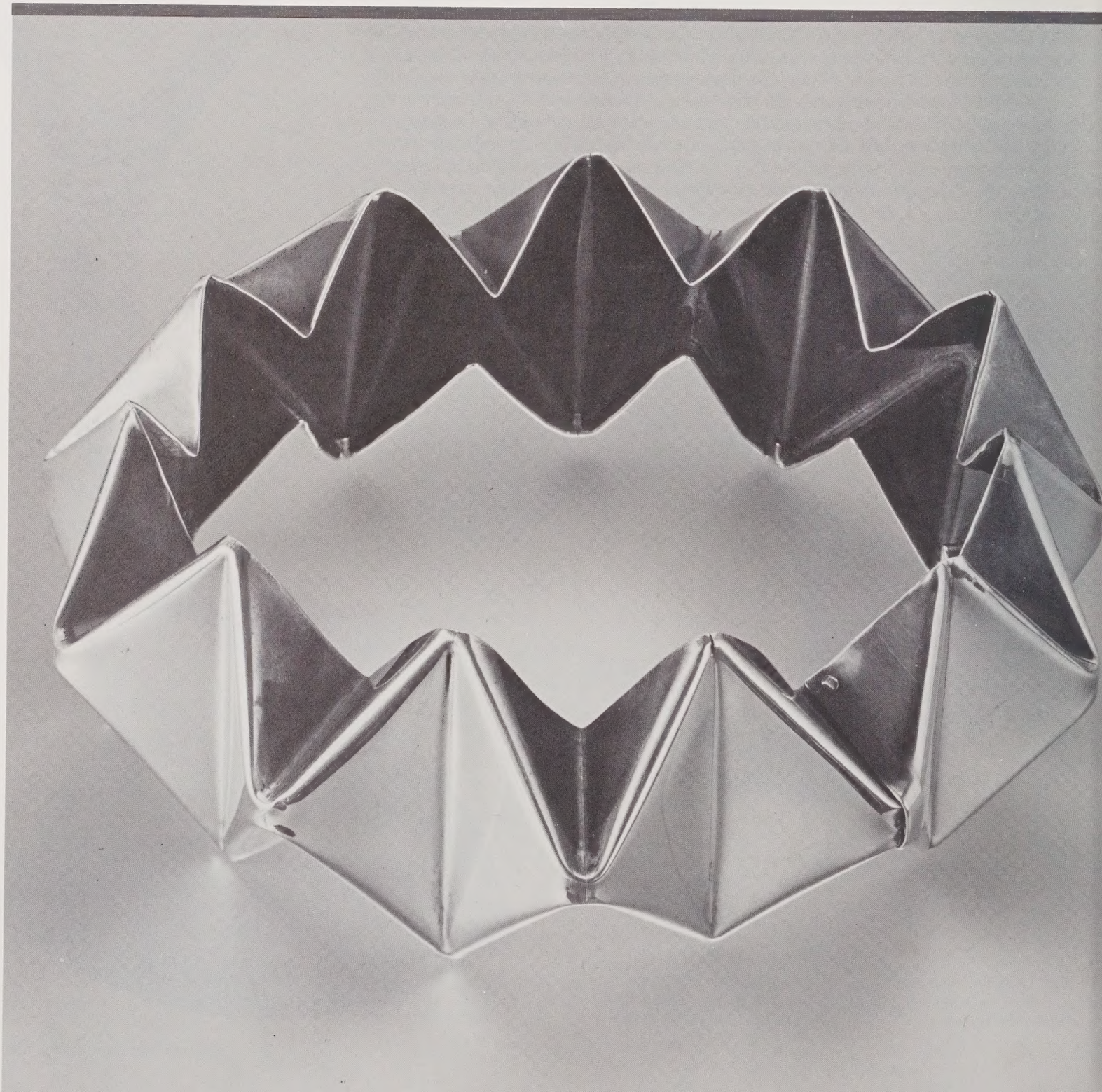


Food Chopper I, deer antler, mild steel, carbon steel, 6x6x6". Photo: Mel Evans

Food Chopper II, bronze, acrylic, brass, carbon steel, 5x3½". Photo: Mel Evans

The San Francisco Metal Arts Guild
yesterday and today

by Merry Renk and Carrie Adell



When I returned from Europe in 1951, my friend Margaret de Patta called and invited me to join a group of metal artists who were structuring an organization dedicated to the needs of producing craftsmen. This group held monthly meetings which I attended, and at one I helped select the name Metal Arts Guild (now often just MAG). At that time I was struggling to earn a living as a jeweler and enamelist and had had no training in other areas of metalsmithing. I had owned a gallery while I was a student at the Institute of Design in Chicago, so I volunteered my display experience to the MAG exhibition committee.

Nearly every exhibit we have held, including museum exhibits, have required many volunteer hours. Beyond attaching pieces of jewelry to displays, we communicate our special needs to museum staffs: that the work be well lit, be displayed against a neutral background, stand no more than six inches from the showcase glass and that no written material be placed inside the case. The time spent with the exhibition committee over the years, working together on group goals, has added a larger dimension to my life, part of which is the comraderie of shared struggles and successes.

At MAG meetings I benefitted from technical discussions. Once I was invited to spend the morning in the shop of member Peter Macchiarini watching his soldering techniques. Margaret de Patta invited me to watch her construct a brooch at her workshop. Irena Brynner gave me the name of a downtown technical jeweler who she and Margaret de Patta used and he prepared my ring for my first diamond.

At the College of Marin, the Guild also sponsored a silversmithing workshop under the directorship of member Aileen Runkle, who had attended a special Handy & Harman seminar. The mature artists, Margaret de Patta, Milton Cavagnaro and others wanted to develop a "group design" that we would produce at the workshop. When that plan did not materialize, they no longer attended. However, most of us, like the members with whom I drove across the Bay, Florence Resnikoff and Irena Brynner, had never before learned raising and forming techniques. For me to experience the magic of hammering a flat sheet into a hollow cup at the Guild workshop was the breakthrough into three-dimensional design.

During those early years of the Guild Margaret de Patta (1903-1964), a nationally known goldsmith with 25 years of experience, became the friend whose wisdom was especially enriching for me because she could analyze and verbalize her personal concepts and ethics. She was elected president in 1951 and served two terms. In 1955 she wrote a history of the then four-year-old guild which I offer here as a concise statement of its organization and purpose: "In the spring of 1951 several metal craftsmen of San Francisco met together to discuss the possibility of forming an organization which would do for them what Artists Equity was established to do for painters and sculptors. After several talks had been held, a large meeting was called to which all of the Bay Area metal art workers were invited. The desirability of an organization was unanimously admitted and steps were taken to establish temporary officers until a formal election could be held, and a committee was appointed to formulate the aims and objectives of the prospective guild.

"At the July 1951 meeting, the group elected to be known as the 'Metal Arts Guild,' the first election of officers and committee heads was held and a special committee set up to draft a constitution and bylaws.

"In 1952, the constitution was adopted with the objectives as follows:

"Purposes and Aims

"The primary aims of the guild are to:

1) A. Protect the Guild members' work by requiring insurance or written statement of acceptance of responsibility by the shop, gallery or exhibitor,
   B. Require guarantee of shipping costs one way by shop, gallery or exhibitor,
2) To furnish legal advice when necessary to any Guild member,
3) Mutually exchange information regarding findings, materials, equipment, outlets, shops, galleries, museums, etc.,
4) Cooperate in large purchases of materials, looking toward reduced costs for same,
5) Establish specific policies regarding designs for special orders,
6) Establish a bureau of public relations activities, through:
   A. Organization and circulation of educational exhibits,
   B. Furnishing of speakers with slides, etc. for schools, clubs, radio and televison programs, or any organization requesting such services, and
7) The Metal Arts Guild shall be a nonprofit organization.

"The Metal Arts Guild in its fourth year of existence has successfully carried out its program as envisioned in its inception. The proof of its value is attested by the large number of active members.

"The Guild presents, at its monthly meetings, a prominent speaker on some subject of special interest to metalworkers.

"All metalworkers, teachers and students are eligible for membership. Guests are welcomed at all meetings."

Today the continuing strength of the Metal Arts Guild lies in the quality and quan-

Opposite page: 1953 Merry Renk, *Pyramids,* flexible hairband, folded and riveted sheet silver. **Above: 1982** Britta Schoemer, *Pendant,* sterling silver, 24k and 14k gold, garnet, diamond

Below: 1983-84 Carrie Adell, *Rock Groups: Metaliths, Manoliths and Touchstones,* married metals, shell-formed, sterling silver, copper, brass, nickel, gems, average size: 1¾ x ¼". Photo: S. Deveary. **Opposite page, top: 1982** Kay White Quinn, *Sea Treasure* container, pewter with shell lid. **Center: 1950** Victor Ries, *Candlestick,* oxidized brass. **Bottom: 1980** Armonita Yvren, *Sugar Spoon.* Photo: George Post

tity of its members. The "sponsor's" letter contained 12 names, nine studio professionals and three teachers. At the end of the first year there were 45 members. Now we are 130 strong, with active members residing mainly in the Bay Area counties.

In the original constitution there were two types of membership: "full" members, who had had work accepted by an outside jury or a MAG jury, had all the privileges of membership; and "regular" members, who were practicing metal craftsmen or anyone sufficiently interested in the aims of the Guild, had privileges of membership but could not vote on officers nor enter exhibits. This separation of membership became burdensome and was eliminated a few years later. Our categories are now: active, student and honorary. I regret that there is not enough space to list and describe each member and her accomplishments. As with many societies, we have had a passing parade of members who at first are very active and give much time and energy and then "burn out" and resign or become inactive.

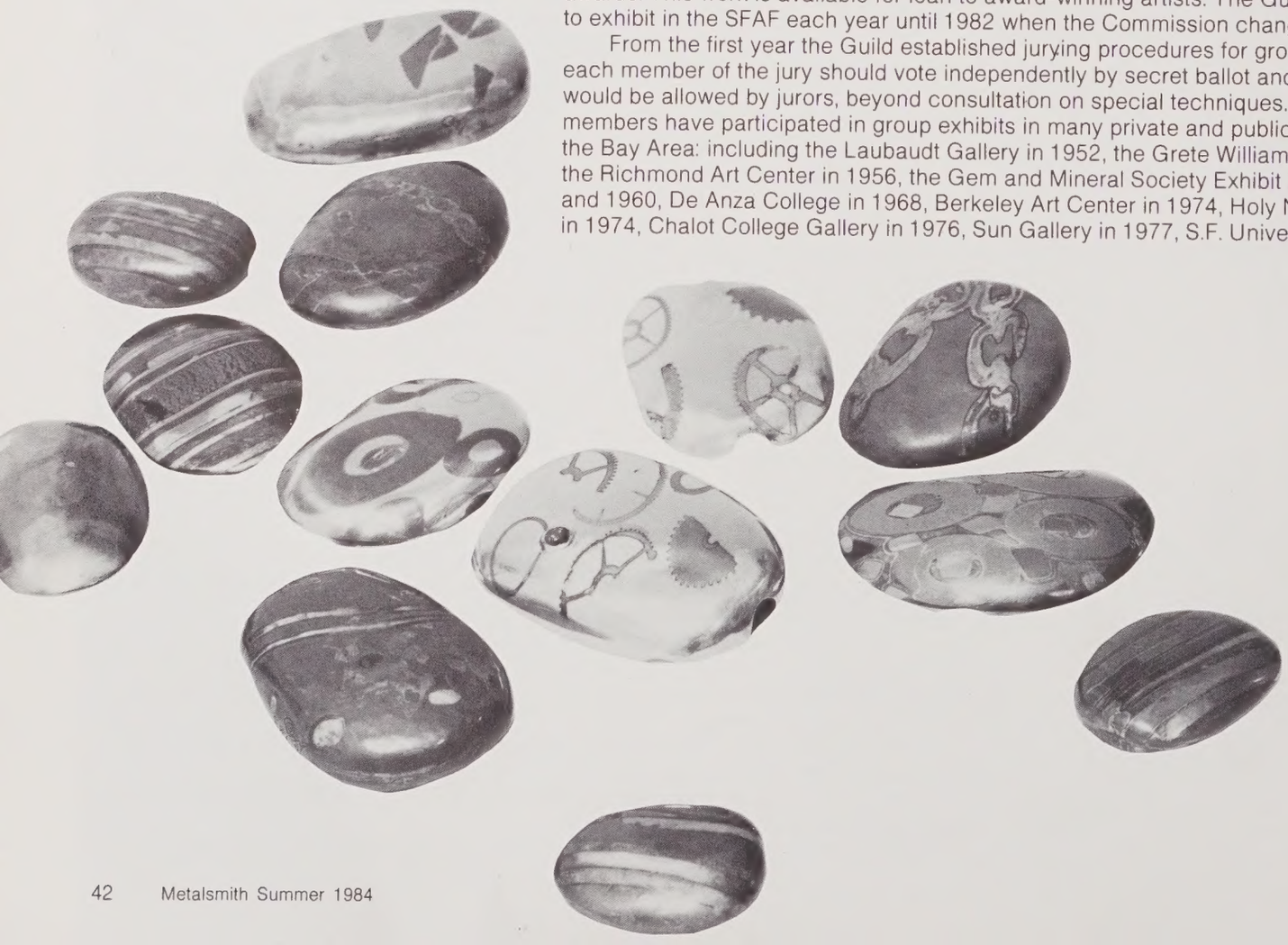
I joined the Metal Arts Guild (MAG) as a "regular" member and did not qualify for the first exhibit in 1951. The next year my entries in the California State Fair were accepted by the jury and I became a "full" exhibiting member, until last year when, along with the remaining founding members Francis Sperisen, Byron Wilson and Vera Allison, I was voted into the new category of "life" member.

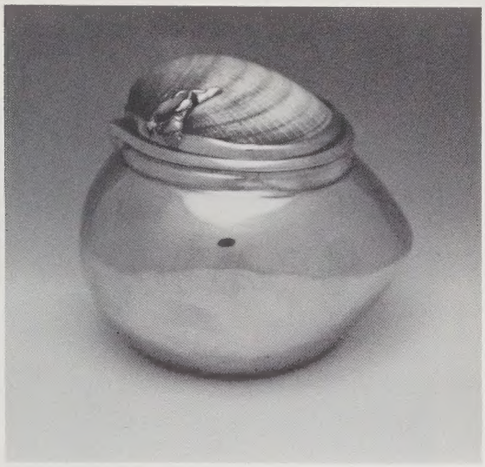
In 1960 there was a slump in attendance and a vote was taken to see if the Guild should continue. The result was, yes, the Guild should continue as it provides valuable services to beginning metal artists and offers the possibility for exhibition in museums.

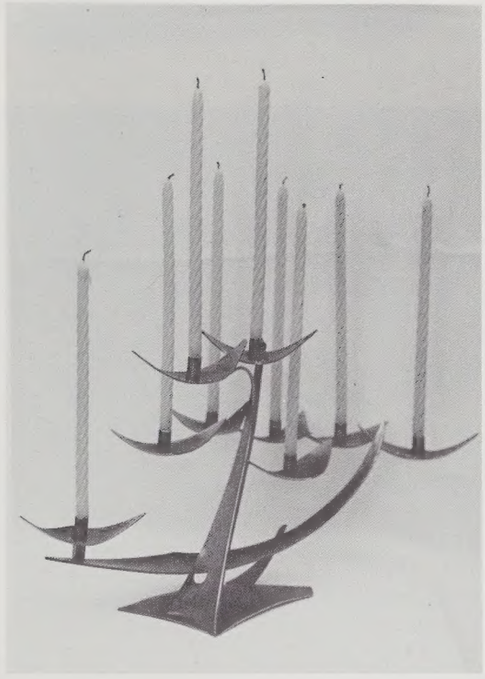
It was decided to hire a member, Bob Randolph, as executive secretary. He is also our official photographer and caretaker of exhibit cases and equipment, and he is responsible for the bimonthly newsletter which announces meetings and pertinent information sent by members about exhibits and other matters of interest. His devotion has been a factor in the continued success of the group.

In the 1940s, the San Francisco Arts Commission (SFAC) began sponsoring an outdoor art fair. The first annual Metal Arts Guild juried exhibition was held at the seventh annual San Francisco Arts Fair (SFAF) in 1951. For the fair members designed a canopied booth, which required many hot, sweaty hours to assemble, disassemble and store each year. Originally we were loaned cases by the SFAC, but later a member built a number of secured, lighted wooden showcases which exhibited our work to advantage. Members set up individual exhibit and sales areas on community tables, shared the weather and helped each other through the five days with humor and appreciation for new outlets, special orders and sales. For a few years all the SFAF jewelry awards of merit were given to Guild members' work. The SFAC owns a fine collection of MAG members' work collected over the years through purchase awards. This work is available for loan to award-winning artists. The Guild continued to exhibit in the SFAF each year until 1982 when the Commission changed its format.

From the first year the Guild established jurying procedures for group shows: each member of the jury should vote independently by secret ballot and no discussion would be allowed by jurors, beyond consultation on special techniques. MAG members have participated in group exhibits in many private and public galleries in the Bay Area: including the Laubaudt Gallery in 1952, the Grete Williams Gallery and the Richmond Art Center in 1956, the Gem and Mineral Society Exhibit in both 1955 and 1960, De Anza College in 1968, Berkeley Art Center in 1974, Holy Names College in 1974, Chalot College Gallery in 1976, Sun Gallery in 1977, S.F. University High







School in 1981 and the Gem and Mineral Society of Castro Valley in 1984.

Other group exhibits were held at the San Francisco Museum of Art in 1951, at the De Young Memorial Museum in 1953 and 1961, at the Palace of the Legion of Honor in 1959. Unfortunately, Bay Area museums no longer mount group shows unless the exhibit is part of a larger event, such as "The Metal Experience" in 1971, which was sponsored jointly by the Oakland Museum of Art and the Guild and was open to all California metal artists. For this show, besides the production of a catalog, the Margaret de Patta Memorial Committee donated a design award, and the Oakland Museum gave a purchase award and chose four artists for a later group show.

Group exhibits also traveled, the first, from 1956 to 1958, was sponsored by the American Federation of Arts. Others, from 1959 to 1960 and 1964 to 1966, were sponsored by the Western Association of Museum Directors.

When Margaret de Patta died in 1964, I proposed that the Guild make a memorial in the form of a book. I chaired the Margaret de Patta Memorial Committee, which included nonmembers and her widower, Gene Bielawski. A memorial exhibit was held at the San Francisco Museum of Art and the Museum of Contemporary Crafts in New York, and a Margaret de Patta Memorial Fund was begun. A collection of pieces was given to The Oakland Museum (a museum dedicated to California artists) with the condition that the collection be shown at least five times during the next 25 years. In June 1976 a retrospective exhibition was made possible through the collaboration of the Margaret de Patta Memorial Committee and the curator Hazel Bray of The Oakland Museum with a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. The monograph on the collection, *The Jewelry of Margaret de Patta—A Retrospective Exhibition,* with an essay by Yoshiko Uchida and an analysis by Eugene Bielawski, was published by and is still available from The Oakland Museum. The Metal Arts Guild owns a brooch by Margaret de Patta donated by her widower.

Our meetings have always had a program where an invited guest or a member will share technical, esthetic and personal experiences. There are records and notes from many of these programs on pricing, business procedures, plagiarism, taxes and a file of retail outlets with members' comments. Other notes describe experiments on making purple gold, photography of small objects, lost-wax casting, rubber mold-making, plating and electroforming, faceting, etching, enameling, metal weaving, tool-making and blacksmithing, among other topics. We also have had presentations of or by goldsmiths from Europe and from the collection of the British Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths.

Guild meetings also provide valuable connections among members. For example, in 1951 I kept hearing about contemporary furniture shops that bought jewelry, specifically Nanny's in the Filmore district of San Francisco and a new store called Fraser's in Berkeley. Some members encouraged me to take my collection of enamels on silver to these shops. Nanny Benderson of Nanny's became so successful with jewelry by Guild members that she opened a contemporary jewelry store in downtown San Francisco. She sold the work of 70 jewelers, and the store became the main support of four Guild members, including myself.

The Metals Arts Guild has spoken out on a number of business issues, including entry fees and the rights of members to structure their own business policies. In the early years group publicity was easier to achieve. In 1952 Universal International Newsreel made a movie called "Mobile Earrings" using some work by Guild members for which they gave blanket credit to the Guild. There have been photos and articles in the *San Francisco Chronicle* and *Examiner.*

The Guild has submitted names for jurors in the San Francisco Art Fair and California State Fair juries. It has sent a representative to the Affiliated Art Groups of the Bay Area (AAGBA) which advised the San Francisco Art Commission on the annual SFAF. Representatives were also sent to the early American Crafts Educational Council meetings which formed the Bay Area Designer Craftsman.

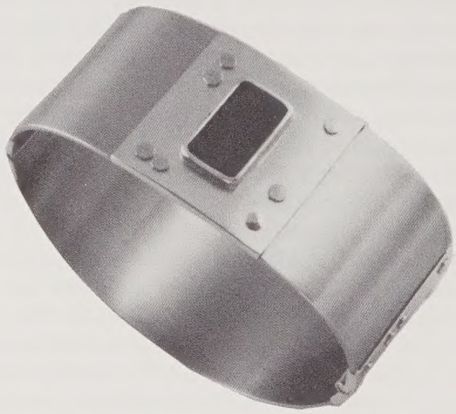
The Guild has a library of books and magazines which was lent to Museum West until it closed in 1968. The books are now available to members by request. There is a scrapbook of members publicity, tapes of some programs and presentations and a slide file which members should keep up to date.

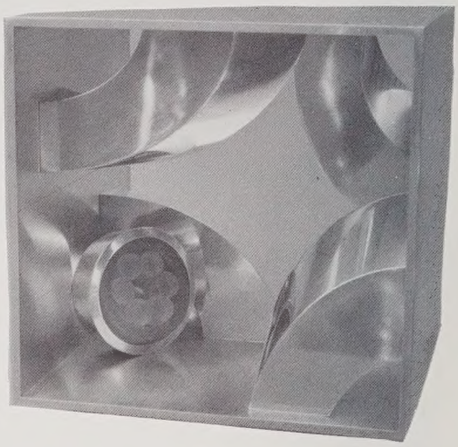
Of the founding members, six continue to be active in the field: Irena Brynner, working in Geneva, Switzerland; Peter and Virginia Macchiarini, in their shop on Grant Avenue in San Francisco; Florence Resnikoff, as the head of the Metal Arts Department of California College of Arts and Crafts; Byron Wilson, retired last year from the California College of Arts and Crafts and now designing individual pieces; and I continue to design in my balcony studio.

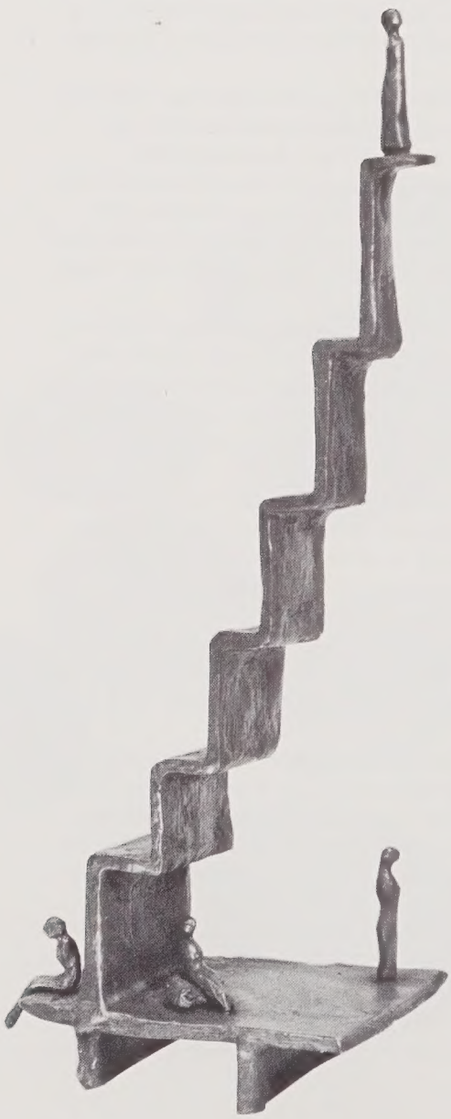
I exhibit with the Guild whenever I have pieces available and still volunteer with jewelry display. I still attend meetings that intrigue me. In the spring of 1981 the tables were turned and the meetings came to me. The Guild held its monthly meeting at the California Crafts Museum in Palo Alto where "Merry Renk Jewelry—A Visual Biography and Retrospective" was on exhibit and where I gave a slide lecture. So our exchange continues.

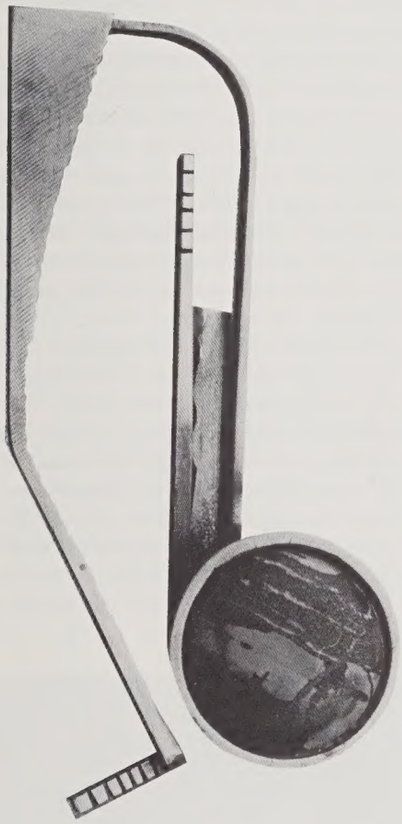
—Merry Renk

Clockwise from top left: 1982 Abrasha, *Bracelet-watch,* stainless steel, 18k gold, L.C.D. quartz module, synthetic emerald (for crystal). **1981** *Arthur Lutz,* Sculpture, aluminum, plexiglass. **1960** Jack Nutting, *Ring* with interchangeable stone. **1960** Peter Macchiarini, *Brooch,* copper, brass, sterling silver, inconel (hard metal developed in WW II) and chalcedony. **1959** Harry Dixon, *Sundial,* copper, commissioned for Luther Burbank Memorial Garden, Santa Rosa, CA. Photo: John Le Baron. **1980** Genevieve Barnhart, *Estella,* from Pilgrimage series, bronze









Carrie Adell, a goldsmith who is presently more active in MAG continues this history.

When I moved to the Bay Area in 1978, I left behind a crafts network that I had "grown" into during 15 years as a producing jeweler. Through craft-fair cronies I had heard about some Bay Area jewelers with reputations for handling contemporary and handcrafted work of quality. Two of them readily welcomed me and my work. They both suggested the MAG as a means to plug into their long-established metalworking network. At the Christmas potluck party that year I met Merry Renk. She personifies for me what the MAG is all about: personal and professional support, acknowledgment and celebration.

In the five years since I joined MAG, members have come and gone and come back again. The Guild reflects the needs and ambitions of its members. It still sponsors group participation in various craft exhibits and art events, while a number of members also show individually. More than a dozen of us show at various juried national marketing events and exhibitions.

We still meet (except in July and August) on a Sunday near the end of the month at a studio, school, factory, gallery or other artspace to share a program, questions and answers, show and tell and general socializing. Programs are designed to answer the needs of the membership and respond to developments in the field of metalworking. They are often how-to, hands-on events. Programs, workshops and our library afford members an opportunity to sample a technique or procedure before tooling up, before registering for that course or purchasing that huge textbook. Networking members work with and for each other and draw from the membership rolls for their mailing lists.

Membership in the Guild in the last five years has included metalsmithing students, teachers, professors and department heads. One member has a private school of metalsmithing with a professional point of view. Another's shop has employed, trained and nurtured several generations of Bay Area jewelers who are now in business for themselves. There are benchworkers and hot metalworkers. Members' work has been published in books, in articles and reviews, in trade journals and art periodicals. One member leads travel-study tours abroad. A number of members enjoy national and international recognition. Out of MAG ranks also came: a member of the San Francisco Arts Commission, a rock musician, ceramic artists, painters and sculptors of repute, several museum trustees or directors and, of course, studio, workshop and gallery owners. Some members are regular contributors to *Metalsmith.* There is a core group who became friends in the earliest days and remain so. They still maintain their memberships, attend meetings and serve and support the members at large. Some still practice their craft; others have retired, yet still support the Guild. New comers take what they need, or create it, and participate actively, as their needs require.

In the 33 years of the Guild's existence, other craft support groups have arisen. The enamelists of California share members with MAG. So does the Society of North American Goldsmiths. The arts festival and crafts fair movement, long active in the West, is everywhere giving emerging craft artists an opportunity to get their work to the public, and an arena for meeting their colleagues and peers from around the country. Schools, classes and workshops on metalsmithing proliferate, increasing our opportunity to learn traditional and transitional skills. Many of MAG's activities are duplicated and even replaced. What keeps it going despite all these alternatives?

Today, the Guild operates (from what I see) primarily as a support network. It encompasses a local area and answers a local need. When someone needs to know how, where, when, what and "Now that I've made it, what do I do with it?," that person comes to a Metal Arts Guild meeting to find the answers.

I joined the Guild to learn about local outlets and local resources in a new place, to meet people with whom I could share professional and personal everyday interaction, for shopping, museum trips, gallery openings. Networking is a valued "ol' girl" practice, one I grew to appreciate through East Coast crafts activities. How fortuitous to have found a well-established organization in this location to embrace and nurture me.

The point is that we share a common experience. Metalsmithing itself is only a vehicle of communication. The bottom line is: I want to be with other people and share what I am with them. I want them to share of themselves with me. Our discipline offers a common interest. The organization offers a way to share common interests. Through membership people can find company and mutual acknowledgment. It worked 33 years ago. It is still working today.

—Carrie Adell

Anyone can obtain a copy of the Metal Arts Guild newsletter by sending a self-addressed, stamped envelope to P.O. Box 4507, San Francisco, CA 94101.

MAG and the California Crafts Museum are cosponsoring a juried jewelry exhibit, which opens September 13, 1984 and runs for six weeks at the museum's Ghiradelli Square location in San Francisco. ■

Exhibition Reviews

Wendy Ramshaw Retrospective
Westminster Gallery, Boston, MA
December 1983–January, 1984
by Paula Dinneen

This exhibit, which originated at the Victoria and Albert Museum in London in 1982, will be traveling for two years throughout the United States. The pieces included in this collection, mostly metal and ceramic jewelry, span about 13 years of artistic development. There are approximately 90 pieces to explore here, including rings, pins and necklaces, some of which were done in the artist's own studio and others in collaboration with Wedgwood.

Wendy Ramshaw is one of the few contemporary artists working in the craft vernacular who has chosen a high degree of technical sophistication, and, at the same time has successfully maintained a humanity and delicacy of scale and proportion. From this show it is immediately clear that a striking transition of shape and color exists throughout this body of work. Further, each element within a composition has a finely tuned interrelationship of parts.

Wendy Ramshaw is a native of Great Britain and currently lives and works in London. Her formal training as an artist began in 1956 at Newcastle-on-Tyne College of Art and Industrial Design. In 1960, while studying for a teaching diploma, she discovered the decorative quality of etched copper plates. At that time, she considered her fascination for making ornaments a creative medium for children. In the later 60s she and her husband, David Watkins created a line of fashion jewelry under the name *Something Special.* These pieces were designed to accommodate Op Art trends in the fast-paced fashion world. Made of paper, sequins and colored foils, they were short-lived, however, they represented an impulse for self-adornment. Out of this period of exploration Ramshaw developed a desire to explore metal.

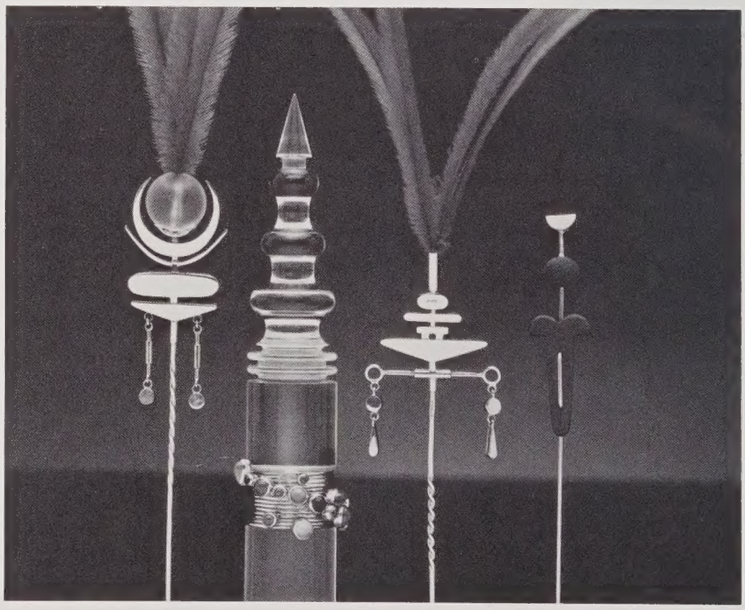
Out of the fashion jewelry came a deliberate yet sensitive style for which Ramshaw is well known, for example in the multiple ring set. These lathe-turned pillars are in fact miniature sculptures, which although only 3" in height command an architectural presence. In this show there are several varieties of these rings, either in plexiglass or nickel, accentuated with bands of champlevé enamel and gemstones of amethyst, moonstone and peridot.

In 1978 during a trip to Australia Ramshaw began to incorporate decorative additions of emu feathers and ceramics into her jewelry. These softer materials caused the work's geometric silhouette to soften and its imagery to become more primitive, even aboriginal. Several pieces shown here represent this whimsical and more carefree delineation. Even her line studies turned away from the technological inclination which had here-to-fore dominated her work. With white ceramic Ramshaw began to create soft geometric forms. In *Large Disk on a Hoop,* for example, pink and white Jasper floats on the shoulders of the wearer.

When asked that year by the Victoria and Albert Museum to participate in a loan exhibition, Ramshaw seized the opportunity to further refine her beads, using a lathe. She approached Wedgwood with the idea of a collaborative venture which would allow her the opportunity to explore a full palette of ceramic colors. Although most of the work made use of the well-known Wedgwood blue, Ramshaw also explored blacks and whites. With great success she combined gemstones in blues, oranges and purples with matt ceramic surfaces, and the result was an unexpected vibratto.

Her attention to mechanics should not be overlooked. Each piece represents a careful series of joinery allowing it to be flexible and wearable. Further, Ramshaw has devised the means by which her work can be enjoyed when not worn, such as the ring pillar and bead spindle. The wearer can also rearrange the pieces on a neckring to create a variety of shapes and colors.

What is most interesting about Wendy Ramshaw's career is how she has combined the different parts of her artistic development into her work. The results are a highly interactive series of symbolic pieces. It is obvious that for Ramshaw each piece triggers a series of possibilities, and through these explorations she has successfully modified the many details and mechanisms of her vocabulary. ■



Left: *Double Image,* neckpiece, white jasper discs and beads, silver gild beads on nickel alloy wire, 6 variations, Wedgwood and Wendy Ramshaw Collection. **Above:** Ring Set and Brooches. Photos courtesy: Westminster Gallery

Lois Etherington Betteridge
Museum of Natural Sciences, Ottawa
June-September, 1983
Yaneff Gallery, Toronto
November, 1983
by Suzanne Joubert

The silver objects of Lois Etherington Betteridge shone in an elegant solo exhibition of both holloware and jewelry, with the accent on the former, which just concluded a three-year tour of Canada. The work spanned the last 10 years of an already long career and conveyed the gradual progression of an ever-so-slightly baroque freedom. The baroque, however, never quite overrules the initial class sobriety of her work.

Remarkable among the attributes of this artist are her amazing practical inventiveness and the exquisite fantasy and care she lavishes on the supposedly "unimportant" details. In combination these qualities lead repeatedly to delightful surprises, such as the reticulated gold inlay found on the reverse side of a serpentine pendant, or the enamel watch face cum "moon dial" on the bottom of the *Tot Cup for an Insomniac.*

As to style, a taste for intricate yet almost "natural" ripples flows through several of the most beautiful pieces, notably the masterly *Spice Shaker.* Also characteristic is the way in which silver is successfully combined with other noble materials such as ebony, horn or stone. My favorite examples of this are the *Brandy Snifter* with its antler stem superbly inset with sterling, and the small ink bottle crowned with an ebony stopper. Among Betteridge's distinctive traits is also a certain teasing humor, particularly in the most recent works, including *Ice Cream Cone, Pill Tube with Lips* and *Tot Cup for an Insomniac.*

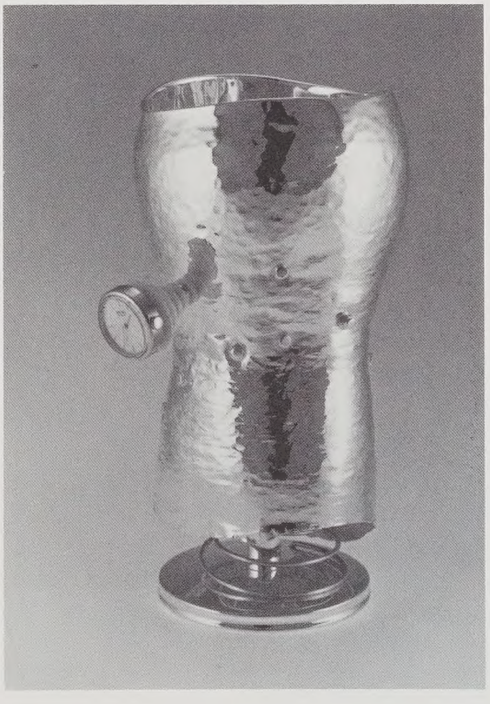
Yet a deeper, more important originality emerges on analysis of the whole body of work and on comparing it with contemporary production in general: While Lois usually makes objects with a function and seldom succumbs to the common temptation of creating abstract "sculptures" of a supposedly higher artistic stature, she cannot, on the other hand, be described as a fabricator of "designs." The concept of design being so linked to functionality since the Bauhaus, one might expect her concern with function to lead to design work. In fact, though, she generally produces one-of-a-kind objects with a function, which evolve as marvelous works of art, not because of any pretentions to usefulness, but because of the successful integration of either straightforward or ritual purpose with surprisingly free expression and absolutely stunning technical beauty.

These last three points—the trend towards abstract craft, the trend of modern design, the alternative expressionism of the work of Betteridge—bear further consideration. In my opinion, there exists no hierarchy between art and craft other than that engendered by cultural prejudice or that of an individual artist's intelligence. Traditional oriental cultures, for example, do not consider the art of pottery to be inferior to that of painting; they only judge some pottery to be inferior to some painting, and vice versa. In contrast, western hierarchical segregation of arts has recently led a number of ambitious and accomplished craftsmen to attempt escape in the direction of the conceptual. Not surprisingly, the results of such efforts have often been disappointing, being artificial in their intention. This exodus is especially inappropriate just now because we need a renewed integration of art and life, and craftsmen should be particularly adept at this. Why then should they now depart in a direction which has been "modern" for the past 80 or 90 years, and which, despite its breakthrough in some respects, has quite obviously failed to maintain communication between artists and their public? While admitting that the trend to the abstract is still one favored by the establishment and is therefore endowed with certain benefits, I for one do not believe that the best creators are motivated by such incentives.

Design for its part, has also been a "modern" value since the beginning of this century. It has come to be synonymous with simple, often ingenious, flowing lines, well adapted not only to function but equally importantly to industrial reproduction on the assembly line. Hence the very successful streamlined forms of chairs, lamps or whatever with which we have all become familiar, but at the expense of an inevitable loss of individuality. Nevertheless, modern design does deserve credit for at least being democratic, since it has, in contrast to contemporary abstract art, become very much a part of everyone's life.

Returning to my third point, and the work of Betteridge, it seems that she largely resists both the flight into abstraction and the extra simplicity called for in potentially commercial design. I say "largely" because, interestingly, the exhibition did present a few examples of commercially oriented designs, such as stately pewter goblets. However, the vast majority of her compositions in silver displays a complexity and unpredictable fancy which would not comfortably lend itself to mass production. They are not rationally planned ahead, but rather have developed spontaneously from the initial idea, very much as paintings do. This allows for the rich irrationality of true art. By irrationality I mean that part of genuine thinking which evades consciousness: the freeing of *other* ways of thinking, since thinking is after all mainly a relation-making process.

I believe there never is really great art without the free play of what has been called, rather unscientifically so far, "instinct" or intuition: that deeper, hidden, thinking part of us which we do not control but which we can learn to invoke and trust, as Lois Betteridge obviously does. ■



Far Left: *Ice Cream Cone,* raised sterling, silver with chasing and repoussé, vermeil, pearl, 4" h., 1983. **Left:** *Tot Cup for an Insomniac,* raised sterling silver with Seiko clock and celluloid, 5½" h., 1983.
Photos: Keith Betteridge

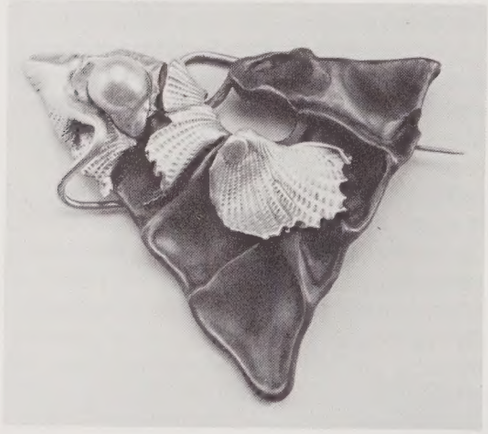
Fourth Annual Selected University Metalsmiths
Norman R. Eppink Art Gallery, Emporia State University, Emporia, KS
October 24–November 11, 1983
by Gary Marsh

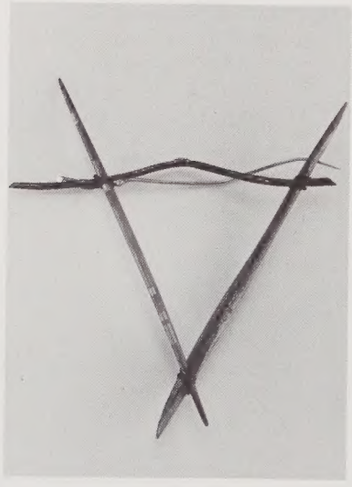
For a number of years two universities have been selected to send work for an exhibit at Emporia State. This year the universities were: Boston University, with instructors Jamie Bennett and J. Fred Woell; and the University of Wisconsin at Madison, with instructors Eleanor Moty and Fred Fenster. Both of these universities have sponsored metalsmithing programs for some time, which produce high-quality works.

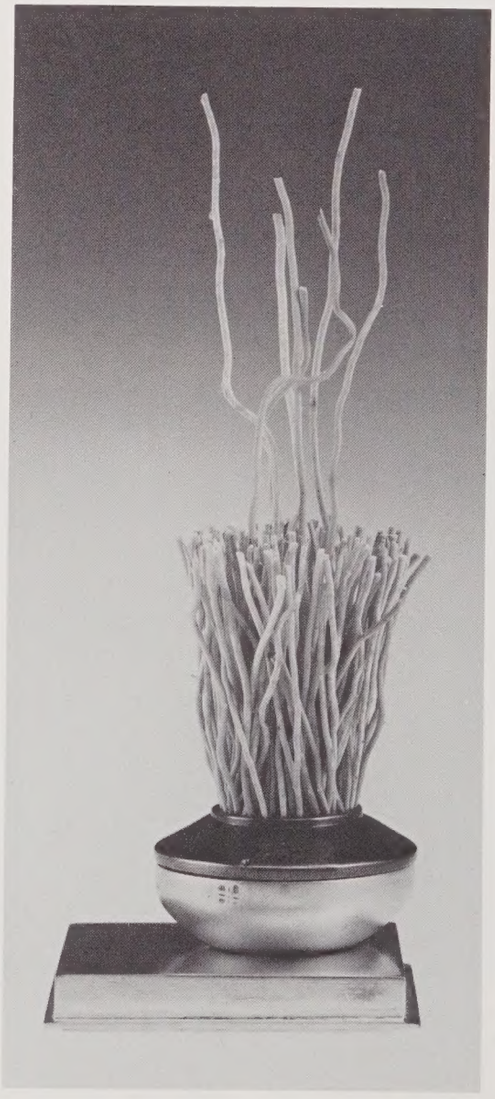
The student and faculty pieces in the exhibition represented a good cross section of metalsmiths today, from purists to a more risk-taking avant-garde. Rather than admiring or envying technical accomplishments, at this exhibit the viewer was drawn to the underlying esthetic expression of the pieces: This was exemplified by Mary J. Koehl's brooch *Sand and Water Series 1*, where organic overlapping and integration of a cast silver shell and a baroque pearl into repousséd copper evoked a walk on the beach. The composition alluded to waves with seaweed and tide life in the crevices of the shore and rainbows in the bubbles on the beach. A second sensitive image was Missy Chang's *Small Container on Base*. To me it looked like an eternal flame of broom straws and silver caught forever in an instant of time. The viewer seemed to be thrown into a metaphysical trance where time no longer relates to reality. These two works were more than mere objects of adornment or beauty, they showed the artists' observation and sensitivity to their environments.

Rather than relate familiar imagery, the avant-garde is asking questions. The pieces in the exhibition that illustrated this attitude were those by Paulette Werger and Clair Sanford. Werger's *Fishing Memories I* forced the issue of meaning because technique and intrinsic material value were played down. Sticks lashed together hardly qualify for technical or material status. To appreciate the work one had to concentrate on composition and intent. To me the work conveyed the idea of a place you might find at the bend in the creek where debris is trapped and continues to float in the high water, until the creek recedes and it becomes still, entangled. Entwined in the piece were materials, such as a fishing float, leftovers of an old reel or pole and some willow twigs. That chaotic feeling was then contradicted by some simple lashing. This made the placement of the twig, fishing float and sticklike forms important because of the decisionmaking that allowed them to arrive there. The hand of man becomes obvious, through observation, expression and composition. Clair Sanford's *Untitled Vessel* also penetrated the area reserved for the "fine arts," where idea is the first concern. The piece had to be judged on its own merits, not on preconceived metalsmithing expectations. While trying to project a function for the piece, one had to find out what special use it has been designed for, if any. This work had the aura of being a special vessel for an unfamiliar ceremony. The use of a temporary material such as paper in conjunction with metal—a material deemed permanent—further suggested mystical powers or ritual importance.

The four pieces discussed here reflected the artists' attitudes towards their medium. Some were content to express their ideas with established methods, while others allowed the idea to establish the method. Through these attitudes the artist's sensitivity was allowed to express itself. Sensitivity and expression were the keys that moved the works beyond craft, because they allowed the pieces to communicate something beyond utility. ■







Top left: Mary J. Koehl, U. of Wisconsin, *Brooch Sand and Water Series 1*. **Bottom:** Paulette Werger, U. of Wisconsin, *Fishing Memories I*. **Center:** Missy Chang, Boston U., *Small Container on Base*. **Above:** Clair Sanford, Boston U., *Untitled Vessel*

Curtis LaFollette:
Topographical Constructivism, Sculpture, Concrete Poetry
Arthur B. Mazmanian Gallery,
Framingham State College,
Framingham, MA
November 21-December 23, 1983
by Vincent Ferrini

From the very cover of the announcement brochure, one sensed the struggles and conflicts represented in the work in this often-puzzling show. Even though I consider Curtis a good friend, I do not completely subscribe to the more obscure conceptual aspect of some of his work, nor am I particulary entranced by concrete poetry; therefore, I feel free to be objective in reviewing his work.

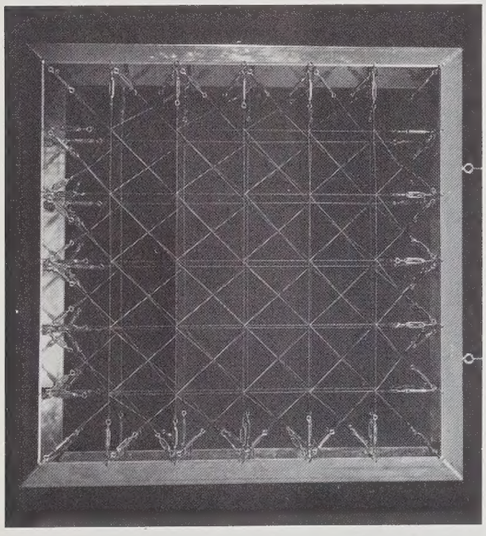
First, let me deal with those pieces closest to holloware, in more conventional silversmithing terms. (Curtis was trained in metals and design at Cranbrook). There were two dazzlingly sleek, nonfunctional "containers," highly chromed and comprised of truncated cylinders balanced at gravitationally "impossible" angles (a feat accomplished with internal weights). They were very exciting in concept, evoking a kind of pull between elegant restraint and giddiness, and pointed toward a potentially fascinating series of further explorations. But there were only two.

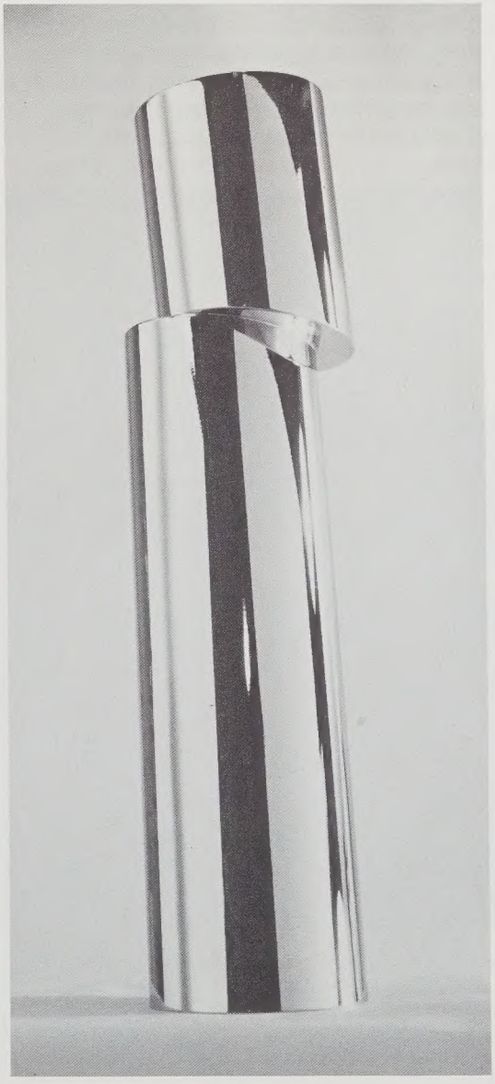
"Too few" proved to be the major criticism of this collection of work, executed in the last three to four years. This is a criticism of which Curtis is well aware. While a very accomplished and meticulous metalsmith, Curtis is also intrigued and stimulated by several other media and sensibilities which vie for time and space in his creative output. Besides his conventionally constructed "holloware," there are a few raised copper forms, painted black, and evocative of the globe of the Earth. They seem to relate to an abiding interest in the earth, an interest which probably stems from Curtis's early life on a farm. This interest is now manifested with great passion in his intense concern for the threatened Earth, its ecology, its creatures and so on. Evolving from his "earth" interests is a series of pierced and folded sheet metal wall pieces. Based upon grids, they evoke aerial-view landscapes of midwestern farmland in some instances, while in others they reveal Curtis's subtle, playful interruptions of grids, something he also enjoys doing with a grid of words in some of his concrete poetry. From the piercing and folding of the triangular openings in sheet metal, one can trace the development of several pieces of folded triangular sculptures, either floor or wall-mounted pieces. However, one is again startled by some of the pieces being executed in sheet metal while others were done in transparent plastic. This reinforces the original impression that here is an artist fairly bursting with several strong directions but having a difficult time concentrating on each one long enough to mine it for its fullest potential. Curtis and I often lament the lack of pure, unfettered time in our creative lives and its effect on our work; the feeling of seldom seeing through a good idea to its logical end before zooming off on another tangent, the transitional pieces perhaps only conceptualized but never put into concrete form. Of course, this is a lament shared by most artists.

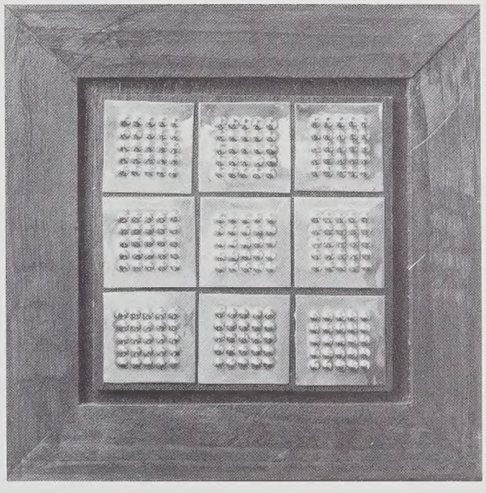
Another extension of his interest in grids has led Curtis to develop several pieces of tension sculpture some of which reach their esthetic best when the implied tension of the wire grid actually seems to pull and deform the angle-iron frame. The inherently strong and rigid reputation of angle-iron, now deformed, enhances the perception of intensity of pull from the wires. One could have enjoyed more investigation into this potentially rich medium, but there were only a few.

One of the most significant facets of this multifaceted man is a very strong political conscience which demands expression. The obvious medium for most political critics is the printed word. Others express themselves visually as political cartoonists. Curtis, however, seems to find his greatest artistic and political expression currently in concrete poetry, where the printed word is augmented by positioning and size on the page. He is obviously distraught by the stupidity of the "arms race" and other ills of humankind and says so, emphatically, with witty and cutting statements.

Although I frequently bridle at being spoon-fed via the intense selectivity and repetition one often finds in gallery shows of an individual artist's work, I feel that Curtis's show would have benefitted enormously by more rigorous selection or more explanation of the evolution of the various concepts shown. Curtis is also aware of the divergent nature of his artistic expression over the past three years but simply has not found the time to make amalgams. Hesitant though I am to try to influence any artist's work, I cannot help but urge my friend to create combinations of some or all of his current media and forms, the resultant statements from which could be powerful, indeed. ■







Far left: *36 Cell Closepacking Octahedron* aluminum, steel, 40½ x 40¼ x 6".
Photo: Angelo Marinosci. **Left:** *Tubular Intersection 2,* brass (chrome plate), 14½ h. x 3 d.". **Above:** *Jari Forest,* bronze, wood, 16 x 16 x ¾".
Photo: Robert Thornton

All That Glitters
The von Grabill Gallery, Scottsdale, AZ
January 7-28, 1984
by Betsy Douglas

"All That Glitters," the first national competitive exhibition of fine art glass and jewelry in Arizona, featured the work of 17 jewelers from all parts of the United States. The jurors were David Pimentel, Associate Professor of Art, Arizona State University and a Distinguished Member of the Society of North American Goldsmiths, and Kate Elliott, a dealer of contemporary glass art and board member of the Glass Artists Society.

The jewelry selected for the exhibition represented a wide range of esthetic interpretations. First prize went to John Lee Hays for his dramatic sculptural pendants, earrings, bracelets and belt buckles fashioned of gold and silver, which employ unusually shaped faceted stones as focal points. Suggesting a space-age imagery, Hays's works utilize classic forms created by angular shapes that are softened by the interplay of organic textures and rich colorful patinas. With great sensitivity Hays accents these textural planes with delicate gold wires and tiny beads of gold. Of particular interest was a pendant of gold and silver, scored and folded to create a lightweight monolithic form. A large amethyst is the focal point of this pendant which also features a handsome gold and silver handwoven chain that is beautifully integrated into the total design of the piece.

A distinct contrast to the precious jewelry of John Hays was the work of Debra Chase, second prize winner. Her *Damsel Fly* hat is made of aluminum screening, copper, plastic, glass, springs and steel wire. Chase designs costumes for dance performances, creating jeweled cloths, hats and ornaments. The opening reception featured members of the Desert Dance Theatre, a professional modern dance troupe, that creatively displayed the fine art jewelry of selected artists from the show. Chase's hat and fan ornament needed such a theatrical presentation. When seen hanging on the gallery wall, the objects were much less effective and raised the question of why they were fine art jewelry.

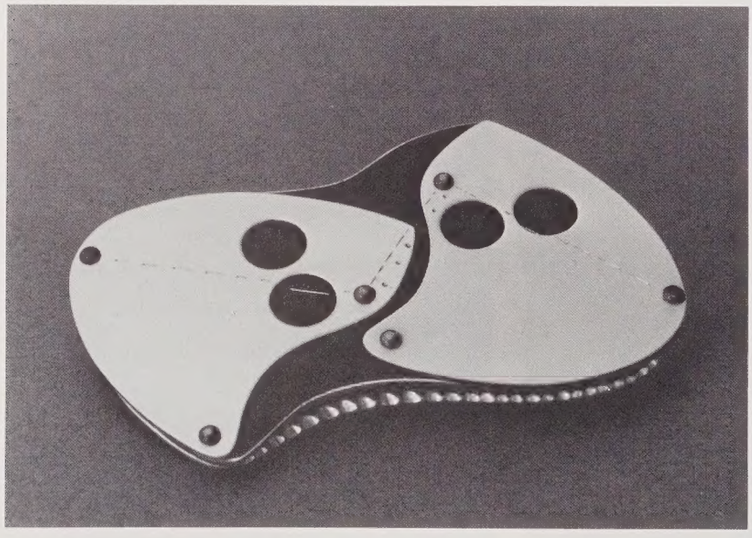
In his juror's statement David Pimentel commented that artists are no longer bound to precious materials in creating contemporary art jewelry but may use any materials which suitably express their feelings and concepts. This attitude is exemplified in the flamboyant jewelry of F.B. Fogg, third prize winner. Working with colorful laminations of handmade paper, she also includes cotton, bone, fur, leather and clay in her jewelry. Made of 50 separate pieces, Fogg's *Night Blooming Neckpiece* was a multicolored beaded necklace with a large floral accent of red and orange paper splashed with numerous tiny beads and wires. The work was painterly, fun and inexpensive. Her bracelet of purples, reds, magentas and oranges called *Aztec Cuff* seemed a miniature painting in paper and leather to adorn the wrist.

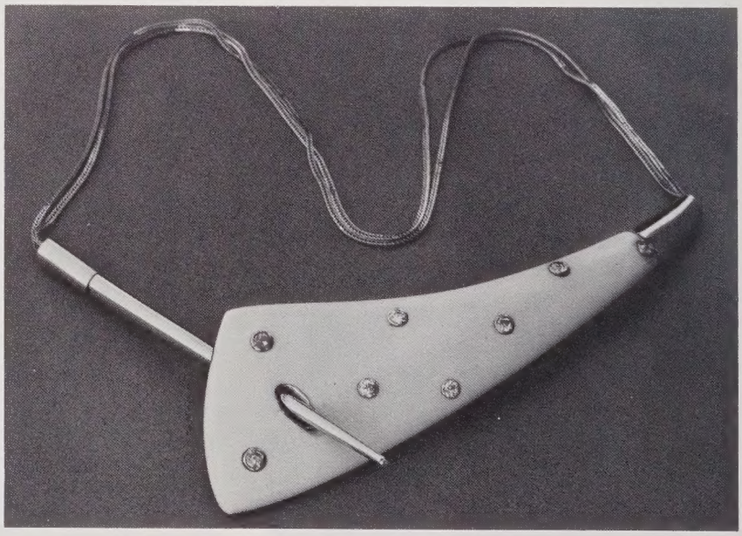
The jewelry of David La Plantz also represented the use of nonprecious materials in an innovative way. His brooches, earrings and pendants were predominantly made of anodized aluminum constructed with gold connections. La Plantz uses his jewelry to express a sophisticated graphic sensitivity laced with a sense of play. Starting with a spontaneous "doodle" on paper, La Plantz develops his ideas into highly refined graphic creations that incorporate color and intricate patterns of engraved lines and dots. Another innovator in the use of nontraditional materials in jewelry is Linda Watson-Abbott. She effectively uses permanent marking pens to graphically decorate her silver brooches. *Amid My Maps of the Canyon* was an undulating sculptured ribbon brooch with delicate line drawing in red and blue to suggest the rock strata. Undulating form was also the visual theme of *Ribbon Candy Brooch* by Beverly Penn Baron. This brooch and her earrings entitled *Mobile III* were exquisitely crafted constructions of silver, copper and other metals showing consummate skill in marriage of metals. Her circular bracelets of silver laced with delicate silver and gold wires created lightweight forms, with elegant sculptural simplicity.

Equally concerned with elegance is Jane Groover, who received the von Grabill purchase award. Groover's bracelets of sterling silver, gold, pearls from Japan and natural slices of agate and amethyst crystals showed her personal sensitivity to materials and forms. Her work emanates a sensual quality through the use of soft subtle color and graceful curvilinear forms.

The beads of Dudley and Betsy Giberson effectively presented the use of glass in a jewelry context. Of special note was the beautiful necklace of hand-drawn, sand-tumbled, acid etched Latticino glass beads. The graduated cylindrical beads were frosted, with a color accent on the inside, creating an illusion of depth. Candy-striped beads were also used as accents. Inspired by ancient Roman, Egyptian and Phoenician trade beads, the Gibersons' contemporary necklaces update the traditions of ancient beadwork.

Laurie Peters' *White Firmament* combined an asymmetrical, highly polished ivory form dotted with diamonds with a piercing gold taper to create a dramatic neckpiece with the illusion of motion. Her work, along with that of Randy and Janie Polk, is concerned with a high level of

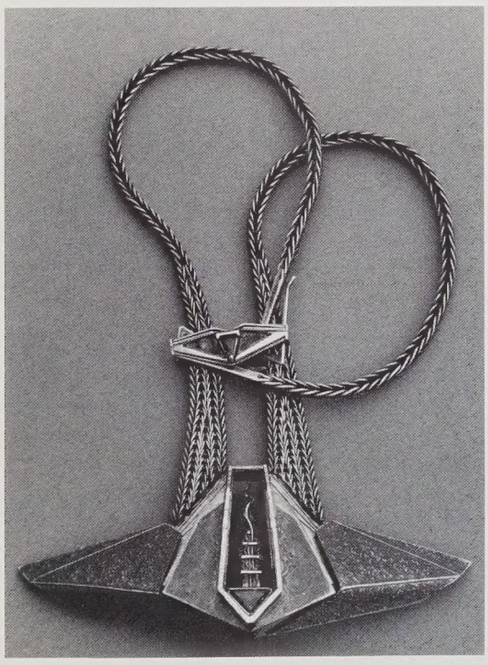




Above: David La Plantz, *Brooch,* anodized aluminum. **Right:** Laurie Peters, *White Firmament,* ivory, gold, diamonds. **Far right:** John Lee Hays, *Pendant,* 14k, 18k, 22k gold, sterling silver, garnets

refinement. The Polks, an Arizona husband and wife team, incorporate raised settings of an unusual and rare purple gemstone called Royal Lavulite as well as jade, coral, tourmaline, garnets and diamonds into their gold bracelets, earrings and rings. Their work represents a style closest to that of traditional jewelry concepts. Kate Watson's jewelry, like that of the Polks, shows consideration for the human form. Her intricately woven fine silver neckpieces of multilinked chains softly conform to the wearer's contours like cloth. Using cloisonné enamel accents, her necklaces demonstrate the ancient technique of chainmaking called "strap work" dating back to 2400 B.C. Her visual images also reflect an appreciation of the intricacies of Celtic art. Watson's skill in creating impeccably crafted functional clasps for her necklaces is notable.

The work represented in "All That Glitters" was essentially wearable, fulfilling the gallery's criteria of being brilliantly attractive, rich and exceptionally crafted ornament. The work of the 17 jewelers represented gave a strong but still somewhat limited view of contemporary jewelry. Greater participation and a more daring attitude in the selection process on the part of the jurors and gallery owners would further the goal to recognize these media as fine art. Nevertheless, this show provided a wonderful opportunity to educate the public to the concerns of contemporary art jewelry as well as to reach a clientele who would enjoy owning and wearing such work. Vicki and Charles von Grabill deserve praise for sponsoring "All That Glitters." It was a good first national competitive exhibition of fine art glass and jewelry in Arizona and the von Grabills should be encouraged to host an expanded second. ■



Komelia Hongja Okim
Plum Gallery, Kensington, MD
February 5-29, 1984
by Dalene Barry

Translated into English, Korea means "chosen." Komelia Hongja Okim, a native of Korea, has faced a great many consequential choices both in her personal and professional lives. Of these, one of the most important has been her choice of United States citizenship, enriched by the traditions of her youth in Korea as the foundation for her imagery. The sense of balance and calm that has resulted from this decision was apparent in her 32 new works in jewelry at the Plum Gallery. The exhibit was neither distinctly Oriental nor American; it illustrated more the intimate response Okim has made to the two often divergent forces.

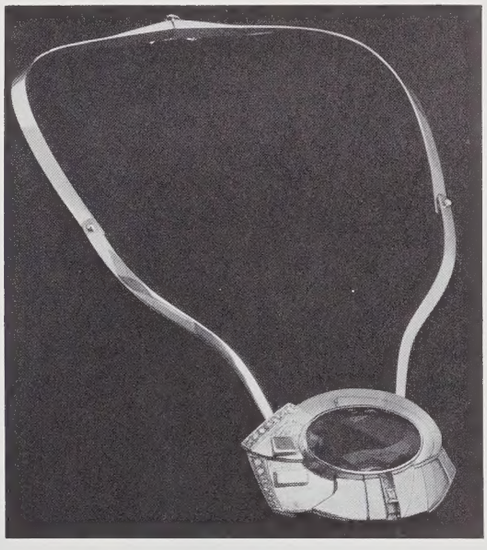
Beyond the exquisite craftsmanship and technical ability, Okim sculpts the metal to demonstrate both the conflict and uniformity she envisions as the central theme in her work. She landscapes silver and gold as settings for gems and titanium set as gems, building a multilayered playground for the eye, full of platforms of color and texture.

A ribbonlike flow of 18k gold shapes the neckpiece for the pin-pendant *Spring,* a regal setting for a large amethyst and several diamonds. A gently stair-stepped ridge of gold leads from the diamonds around the amethyst, bringing the viewer to the focal point of the work, and plunging the imagination into depths of translucent color. In *Amethystvilla,* a 14k gold pin, the German carved amethyst is a reflecting pool for the levels of gold encasing it. A section of the stone was carved out and tiny lines were inscribed to continue the graceful line of gold which appeared to extend into the gem.

East of the Sun and West of the Moon, a whimsical title for a necklace with a little something to please everyone, juxtaposes streamers of yellow and pink 14k gold with reticulated silver, sterling silver and a large yellow topaz in an abstract harmony of texture and line. The necklace is strung on frosted quartz and gold beads.

The jewel-like, almost opalescent quality of Okim's titanium often resembles the abalone shells she also uses. The colorful bits of metal are set as jewels, suggestive of snippets from an abstract painting. The layering of sterling silver, 14k gold and titanium in *Transition I,* a pin-pendant, provided an architectural setting for ivory, wedged into the base, and for a delicate pink tourmaline, glowing softly as it caught the viewer's eye. Oxidation and engraving enhanced the multidimensional quality of this construction, one of the best in the show.

Okim's jewelry is elegant, beautifully crafted and easily wearable. The work is considerably lighter and less massive than much of her previous work. The constructions explore three-dimensional combinations of shapes where planes of metal and stone are juxtaposed for a well-proportioned sculptural look. ■



Left: Komelia Hongja Okim, *East of the Sun & West of the Moon,* 14k yellow and pink gold, sterling silver, yellow topaz, frosted quartz and 14k gold beads, 1983. **Above:** *Spring,* 18k gold, amethyst, diamonds, 1983. Photos: Breger & Assoc.

Robert Ebendorf and Ivy Ross: Finding the Form
Craft and Folk Art Museum,
Los Angeles, CA
November 23-December 31, 1983
by Komelia Hongja Okim

While this was not the first time that Ross and Ebendorf have exhibited together, this exhibition showed clearly their diverse approaches: Ross's jewelry relating to clothing and Ebendorf's relating to wall collages. The new work displayed here represented a variety of unconventional media and techniques. However, though their imagery and concepts differ, their "evolutionary ideas" and energies are similar.

The first showcase at the exhibit was educational, showing both artists' work in progress, from sketches to finalized rendering. These displays clearly demonstrated step-by-step experimentation with and construction of complicated units as they are assembled and transformed into jewelry.

The brooches in Ebendorf's new series were surprisingly elongated—sharp linear forms of chopsticklike bamboo, embellished with mother-of-pearl, oriental papers, ivory, inlaid wood and 24k gold and silver foils. The carefully carved and shaped bamboo chopsticks are used as the main body of each piece, and drawings, paintings and collages are applied with subtle colorations and textures. Some of the brooches are three-dimensionally extended and have the feeling of oriental musical instruments or the Indian bow and arrow. Ebendorf's precision as a goldsmith and his graphic sensitivity are evident in his brooch series. With a sense of discipline and order, he neatly and painlessly carved, lacquered and constructed unconventional pieces. They are innovative—seemingly poised for flight.

The same slender lines of feelings and forms were repeated in Ebendorf's wall collages. The artist's markings and drawings are carefully controlled with subtle textures on a white gesso background: fine combed wavy lines and soft colored pencil drawings, small fragments of seashells, papers and slates. The fragments of stones express "colors of the earth," and various shades and sizes of the fragments create subtle changes of dimension and time. One intriguing collage used Japanese paper with writings and metal scribe markings on seashells and eggshell fragments. heightened with 24k gold foils. In other works, surface details were drawn on old stamps, computer tapes, mother-of-pearl, ivory and bone. The complex strata of these collages creates a three-dimensional illusion filled with memories and realities. These mosaiclike surface details are the primary elements of his collages.

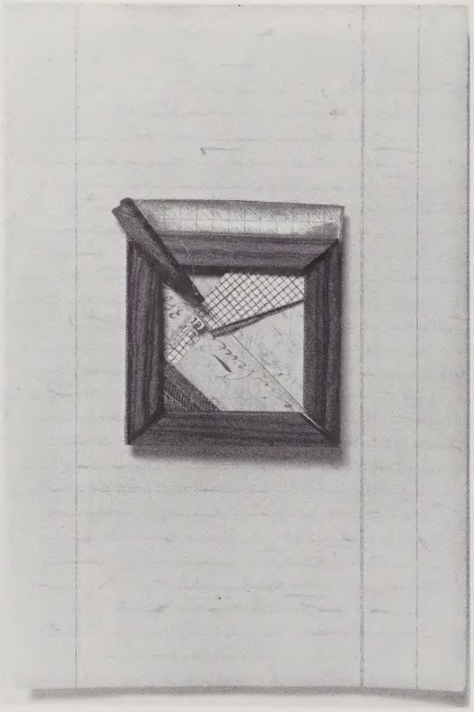
Another group of collages employed cut-out and torn three-dimensional wall reliefs of photo-collage construction. *Photo & Object* wall relief has a 13 by 12 inch still life background to which a 2 by 2 inch framed unit has been added. Another unit, attached outside the frame, is an arrowlike slender projection, the same element we saw in the chopstick brooches. Adorning chopsticks with mother-of-pearl and abalone shell applied on lacquered surfaces is a well-known technique in the Orient. However, Ebendorf's daring forms and approaches are very new to the American metal field. Further, adding 24k gold and silver foil to lacquered surfaces is new to fine jewelry and three-dimensional objects.

Ivy Ross's new concept is a total image of knitwear and jewelry; the units can be worn alone or together. Her idea is to educate the public to coordinate garments and jewelry. She has created a limited-edition collection of six different machine knit garments, using 100% hand-dyed virgin wool, imported silk and Parisian cotton. The knits are expressionistic; Ross uses the body as a vehicle to enliven her visual imagery.

In the jewelry she combines diverse materials such as Formica Color-Core, plastics, titanium, niobium and tantalum with diamonds, amethysts, mother-of-pearl and ivory. These pieces have the same clean graphic patterns as the clothing. Ross uses the complex woven patterns of silk swatches from the 1920s to decorate her bracelet forms.

The concept of versatility was emphasized in garments by the addition of a removable cowl, knit in the same manner as the sleeves, to be worn around the neck or as a hood. Versatility was also apparent in the three-piece tubular dress, a striated tunic cowl, designed to wear front or back. *Color Block,* a full-shaped cream-colored dress, could be gathered into a slimmer silhouette by using Formica Color-Core pins, the geometric shapes and colors of the pin echoing the pattern of the garment. A scarf with removable pins represented Ross's attempt to provide a complimentary background for the jewelry. In a second set of scarves colored titanium was woven into the perforated leather. These were meant to be worn like jewelry.

Ebendorf's and Ross's work is elegant, innovative, highly decorative and involved. These two artists do not hesitate to adapt and create challenging, nontraditional media and techniques. They are constantly searching for new art forms with a "jeweler's sensibility." ■



Above: Ivy Ross, *Color Block* dress, 100% parisian cotton intarsia knit; 5 pins, 2 pairs earrings, colorcore formica, sterling silver. **Right:** Robert Ebendorf, *Wall Object,* old writing paper, wood, eggshells, silk thread

Metalwork:
A National Invitational Exhibition
UAB Visual Arts Gallery,
University of Alabama in Birmingham
February 19–March 9, 1984
by Heather McPherson

This show provided an overview of some of the new directions and esthetic concerns of metalsmiths in the 1980s. Curated by Janice Kluge, it included approximately 50 small metal sculptures and pieces of jewelry by 18 artists from throughout the United States, most of whom teach metalwork in university art departments. As this exhibition clearly demonstrated, in the domain of metalwork it is not possible to separate "art" from "craft."

Although the metalwork on display was extremely diverse in both its technical and esthetic approaches, a number of general tendencies could be observed. Art of the 1980s is frequently characterized as eclectic, and this was certainly true of the work in the show. Today's metalsmith still values fine workmanship and traditional forms and methods, but is also willing to take chances, such as combining plastic with metal or exploring titanium coloration. Also evident is an interest in Post Modern color. Although some of the work in the exhibition was abstract, the majority of the pieces were figurative, often with autobiographical allusions or references to nature. This, along with an emphasis upon individual style, is in keeping with today's art trends, which include a concern with the decorative and a return to narrative and expressionistic imagery.

Christine Clark's mixed-media pieces were among the most unusual and least traditional works in the show. *That Shrine Out There, What's It For?* posed a riddle for the viewer. A shrine usually contains something sacred, but in this case it sheltered a transparent plastic pillow filled with metal shavings topped by a tiny metallic fish. The colorful cutout plastic shapes had a childlike simplicity, but the treatment of color and surfaces was highly sophisticated.

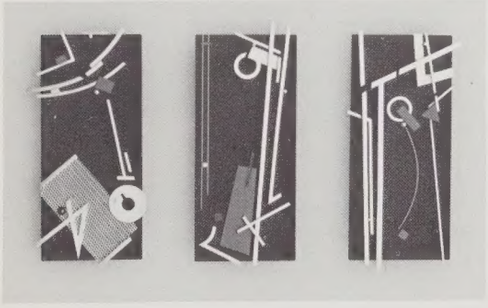
Stuart Giles's *Struck by a Storm* combined steel, copper and found objects in a bitingly humorous piece. The little house with feet which always ends up in precarious situations is a self-portrait of the artist. In this case the steadfast little house confronted a sinister tornado of coiled wire. Also highly personal in imagery were the works by Holly Cohn, such as *Lost Secrets* which featured photoetched portraits of herself in a spatially expansive house. The photoetching process developed for metalwork by Eleanor Moty has been taken up by her students Holly Cohn and Martha Glowacki.

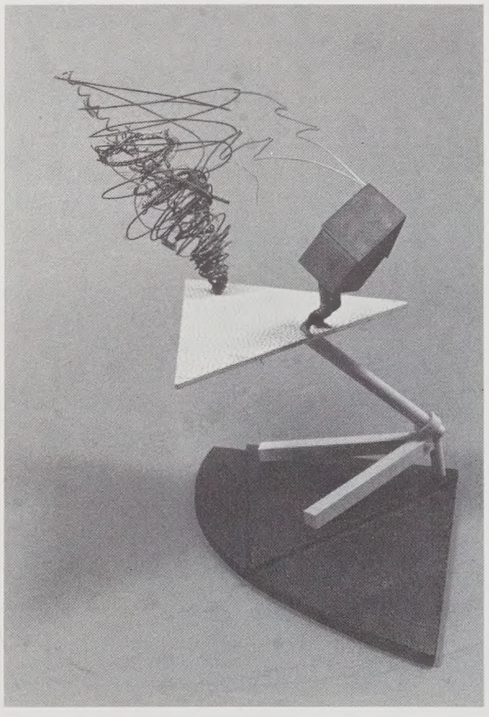
Linda Threadgill also used photoetching in works such as *Shutters,* a wall relief which seemed to unfold like a book. She has created a fascinating range of textures using silver, brass and wood. By spraying acid on thin sheets of metal she has been able to simulate the diaphanous effect of falling leaves. Kate Wagle's gleaming blue *3D B.C.* soared in space, suggesting a bird in flight or a phoenix rising from the flames. Wagle has opted to work on a monumental scale and to incorporate modern materials like autobody paint and glitter. However, here the reflective blue surface was reminiscent of traditional enamel work. The form itself was dynamic and sleekly modern. Although Thelma Coles's *Confinement Denied* and *Mutual Dependency* employed a modified cubist vocabulary, their titles had human references. In *Confinement Denied* the artist experimented with the relationships of planes and lines in space, contrasting the highly polished metallic surfaces with the irregular soldered silver wire fringe at the top.

Carol Kumata's sculpture combined different materials but consistently referred to nature. Her *Locked River* displayed a fragment of an eroded river gorge in a mastabalike black trunk. Her imagery seemed to reflect the increasing distance from nature that is the price of urban existence in modern post-industrial society. Kumata's works were playful on the surface, but also posed more serious questions about modern values.

The jewelry in the show was extremely varied, ranging from the constantly changing colored surfaces of Edward DeLarge's titanium pieces to the machine-age esthetic of Susan Hamlet's plastic and metal jewelry. Edward DeLarge introduced titanium coloration to the United States where it has become popular in the last five years or so. DeLarge's absolute mastery of the technique permits him to create painterly effects such as the "titanium landscape" on one of his necklaces. While the flat, stylized shape of his *Banana Torque* referred to earlier jewelry the piece was modern in its use of titanium and humor. Sarah Nelson colors titanium in a more stylized and less painterly manner than Edward DeLarge and experimented with folding metal in *Wishing.* Much of the jewelry, like the sculpture in this show, involved mixed media. Robert McCall's glittery brooches were built up like cubist collages. Susan Hamlet's plastic and metal pieces had an Art Deco simplicity and a classical feel despite their machine esthetic. Bruce Metcalf's *Lunette Stickpen with Beans and Knives* used food imagery and rapid unexplained changes in scale to capture the viewer's attention in a post-Pop idiom.

The National Invitational Metalwork exhibition in Birmingham displayed a refreshing diversity and a richness of personal imagery and style. The uniformly fine craftsmanship and varied techniques demonstrated that metalworking is alive and well in art departments across the United States. Other artists included in the show were: Fred Fenster, Gary Griffin, Munya Avigail Upin, and Linda Watson-Abbott. ■





Far left: Susan Hamlet, *Panel 1,* plastic, sterling silver, stainless steel, pearls. **Left:** Stuart Giles, *Struck by a Storm,* steel, copper, paint, found objects, 6½ x 8½ x 11", 1982

Virtuoso: A Symposium
Cooper-Hewitt Museum, New York
January 14, 1984
by Bernard Bernstein

It is possible to practice medicine and do it very successfully and happily without much familiarity with or interest in the history of that profession. It may also be possible to practice metalsmithing with the same attitude of detachment, but for many of us it would certainly be less pleasurable. Learning about the style, fabrication and historical context of significant old pieces and the lives and working habits of their makers adds a lot to my enjoyment of my own work and permits me to feel that I am linked up to an unbroken chain of craft workers stretching back to preliterate times.

This past winter, the Decorative Arts Association of the Cooper-Hewitt Museum served up a good helping of historical pleasure when it presented the symposium "Virtuoso," to coincide with the last day of the museum's sumptuous exhibition: "The Art of the European Goldsmith: Silver From the Schroder Collection." A generous contribution from Johnson-Matthey, Inc. made it possible to bring together a group of star-class scholars, who, with the help of many slides, did a wide-ranging show-and-tell on the idea of virtuosity in goldsmithing. For the record, these were the topics covered: "Virtuoso Metalwork from the Sixteenth through Twentieth Centuries," Shirley Bury, Keeper of Metalwork, Victoria and Albert Museum, London; "Reinhold Vasters of Aachen: Renaissance Historicism," Dr. Yvonne Hackenbroch, Curator Emerita, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; "Paul De Lamerie and His Contemporaries," Anthony Phillips, Head, Silver Department, Christie's, New York; "The House of Fabergé: The Workmen Behind the Throne," Margaret Kelly, Curator, The Forbes Collection, New York; "Virtuosity in the Twentieth Century: Design in Silver, Gold, Platinum and Other Metals," Graham Hughes, Publisher and Editor, *Arts Review* (Great Britain), Former Art Director, The Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths, London.

The program was nicely balanced, with Shirley Bury and Graham Hughes covering the territory from the 16th century to today, giving an overview of major artists, pieces and styles. Greater attention to two well-known masters; Paul De Lamerie and Fabergé provided more detail. Then the thrill of discovery of the life and output of (to me) an unknown goldsmith, Reinhold Vasters, rounded out the series.

It was a full day, with more facts and images flying at us than is possible to report on with any kind of completeness. Mention of some aspects of the symposium that interested me may help to convey the flavor of the event.

The word virtuoso has enjoyed considerable upgrading and changes in meaning over the last 300 years. It used to refer to the connoisseur of a particular art rather than the practitioner thereof, and it was tinged with the quality of dilettantism.

The depth of scholarship displayed by the lecturers was impressive. At times a single piece was minutely dissected in terms of style, ornamentation, maker, materials, construction, succession of owners, reasons for its existence, historical events occurring during its travels and dates, dates, dates. I suppose this is what it takes to be an art historian and though I respect and appreciate it I don't think I could put together the tenacity it takes to track down every detail about a piece. Fortunately, the experts were blessed with a good sense of humor and a sensitivity for the make-up of the audience, so the presentations were liberally laced with fascinating tidbits.

I was interested in knowing something about the attendees so I counted the house (about 80 or more) and approached people randomly, asking about their rea-

The exhibition "The Art of the European Goldsmith: Silver From the Schroder Collection," organized by the American Federation of Arts will be traveling for the next two years as follows:

1984—May 27-August 11, The Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL; September 8-October 21, Center for Fine Arts, Miami, FL; November 10, 1984-January 6, 1985, San Diego Museum of Art, San Diego, CA; 1985—February 3-March 31, Dallas Museum of Fine Arts, Dallas, TX; July 21-September 15, New Orleans Museum of Art, New Orleans, LA; October 13-December 8, Worcester Art Museum, Worcester, MA; 1986—January 12-March 9, Toledo Museum of Art, Toledo, OH; April 6-June 1, Denver Art Museum, Denver, CO.

Check with the museum before you go to see the exhibition, as these dates are subject to change. A 208-page catalog is also available, including 250 black-and-white and 19 color illustrations, with text by Timothy B. Schroder, Director of the Silver Department, Christie's, London and the late Dr. J.F. Hayward, formerly Assistant Director of Sotheby's, London. The catalog can be obtained from any of the participating museums or by sending $12 plus $1 postage and handling to: The American Federation of Arts, 41 East 65th Street, New York, NY 10021.

NEF, probably Netherlandish, ca. 1580, silver, parcel gilt and cold enamel, 19¾ x 16". Schroder Collection. Photo courtesy: AFA

sons for being there. There were art historians, appraisers, decorative arts students, collectors, dealers, curators from other museums, interested citizens, art brokers and metalsmiths. It was a treat to see members of the Society of North American Goldsmiths present: Sam Beizer, Kurt Matzdorf and Alvin Pine.

After hearing the legendary name of Paul De Lamerie for years, seeing his work in books and at The Metropolitan Museum of Art, my interest in knowing more about him was satisfied by Anthony Phillips. Phillips made the point that De Lamerie, famous as he was, was one of many craftsmen whose lives as people are practically unknown.

The history of goldsmithing is not all saw, hammer, file and solder. Yvonne Hackenbroch told the fascinating and poignant story of Reinhold Vasters, a 19th-century virtuoso goldsmith whose name was new to me. Poor Vasters became involved with an unscrupulous dealer, and, as a result, may have missed out on the recognition he apparently deserved. The speaker also conveyed the excitement of art historical detective work with her exploration of the history of the Rospigliosi cup, which I remember seeing and admiring for years in The Metropolitan Museum, attributed possibly to Cellini. The last time I looked for it, it was gone. Was it banished to the basement because it really was the work of Reinhold Vasters?

Even if he doesn't exist, we tend to invent and cherish the image of the solitary genius, like Edison, and forget that one person's fame often rests on the contributions of a forgotten team. Margaret Kelly added this dimension in her discussion of the work of Fabergé.

Whether by intent or tradition, the British seem to have the right idea. Many of the modern English virtuoso objects described by Graham Hughes were commissioned as presentation pieces or gifts. The commissions come from all social strata: royalty, aristocrats, municipal governments, livery companies, universities, religious institutions, sporting organizations, labor unions and corporations. How would this translate into American life? Yes, I can picture the United Auto Workers commissioning a silver trophy for the winner of the Indy 500. And then the organizers of that race reciprocate with a sterling robot for the treasure collection of the U.A.W.

The symposium put us in the right mood to tour the exhibition of the Schroder collection of European goldsmiths' work. Those tankards, cups, chalices, nefs, salvers, spoons, reliquaries, bowls and chargers were both inspiring and intimidating.

I left the museum wondering what the art historians will be saying about our generation of metalsmiths at a symposium like this 300 years from now. Make it easy for them. Preserve your pictures and documents. ■

Betty Helen Longhi: New Jewelry
The Plum Gallery, Kensington, MD
October 16–November 14, 1983
by Yvonne Arritt

It is refreshing to see a designer of Betty Helen Longhi's ability break away from the museum mentality and move into the marketplace with affordable production jewelry. She was really three people at the Plum Gallery exhibit, each making technically excellent, visually satisfying and very wearable jewelry. This was an organic, feminine collection of 23 pieces ranging from the very complex to streamlined functional, each, however, graceful and flattering to face or body.

Her newest look, the *Clothesline Series,* incorporates textured, colored niobium and titanium as elegant rags fluttering from forged sterling neckwires. The use of grade-one titanium permits her to transfer the skills perfected in her earlier shell structures to this normally limited material with striking and original results.

The second Betty Longhi has created a reasonably priced line of pin/pendants, the *Mandala Series,* reminiscent of exploding seed pods, and fashioned of sterling silver and heat-colored, textured bronze. Within the limits of a two-inch circle, she has an almost endless potential for variation of elements, a pleasant solution to the one-of-a-kind versus production problem. The top sheet is split, hammered and curled back revealing bursts of color, pearls or forged "waves." Silver attachments for the pendant cords are individually tailored, the only distraction being that the pin findings function "backward," understandable since the artist is left-handed.

Two painterly necklaces, a landscape and an underwater scene with abalone shell, are beautifully crafted with hammer-textured surfaces opposing forged sterling and bronze. I particularly liked the attention to detail as neckwire met pendant. So many jewelry designers approach neckwires as an afterthought, Longhi's are carefully articulated to provide a flowing line and very comfortable fit. Accompanying earrings show mastery of forging techniques and are sufficiently complicated to be interesting as art.

The third Betty Longhi still makes unique collectors' items. Basic to her one-of-a-kind pieces is the concept of dual function: sculptures equally at home on the body or a table. She has invented intriguing spiral hinges and connections which provide an almost invisible fit between jewelry and base. In *Circle to the Moon* both ends of the spiral structure detach, the long spiculum set with moonstone discreetly joining a titanium tail by means of a long, curved tongue-and-groove catch. The bases with jewelry removed are effective forms alone. The display was well suited to the Plum's small jewelry showroom; huge photographs illustrated the wearability of the jewelry/sculptures and offered clues to their intricate construction.

By applying the same meticulous care to production as well as show pieces while keeping prices within the reach of the buying public, Betty Longhi has set an encouraging example for designers who want to earn a living doing what they enjoy. The value of her jewelry as collectibles and wearables can only increase. ■

Left: Betty Helen Longhi, *Pendant Clothesline Series 4,* sterling silver, niobium, 3½" h., 1983; **Above:** *Circle to the Moon,* necklace/sculpture, sterling silver, titanium, moonstone, 9" h., 1983. Photos: Theis Photography Ltd.

Health Hazards Questions & Answers

by Linda Weiss-Edwards

Dear Linda: Can you recommend any additional good reference books to add to my studio library that would cover health hazards encountered in metalworking and their safety measures? I have your Society of North American Goldsmiths "Technical Paper," but my work frequently involves the use of other materials. Thank you.-Mark

Dear Mark: There are several concise books and manuals out that would be appropriate. I will briefly review three that I use:

Artist Beware, by Michael McCann, Ph.D., (New York: Watson-Guptill Publications), 1979. In my opinion, this book belongs in every artist's personal library, that is, every artist who wants to promote and protect his/her own long, healthy life. Michael McCann is the Founder and President of the Center for Occupational Hazards. This nonprofit organization operates the Arts Hazards Information Center and publishes the "Arts Hazards Newsletter."

Artist Beware is divided into two sections. The first, "General Hazards and Precautions," makes it easy to see how the hazards that we encounter can affect the human body. In his discussion of precautions, Dr. McCann covers safe studio set-ups as well as bodily protection equipment. He provides helpful information on what to do if you have suspicious symptoms or actual illness from work-related problems.

The second section covers the hazards involved in any particular medium that is, ceramics,.woodworking, sculpture. This section also has a *great* chapter for enamelists. Here you will find useful, easy-to-read tables about chemicals found in art materials, and how to determine the degree of harmful exposure you may be encountering in your own working environment. Chapter 3 in this section, "Relative Toxicity Ratings," is particularly useful in helping to determine the appropriate precautionary measures to take for the amount of toxic substances in your studio. Frequently, artists make the mistake of assuming that irregular exposure to hazardous substances in a private studio does not involve any risk. This toxicity rating system ends the guesswork. Chapter 6, "Personal Protective Equipment," is the most explicit survey of goggles, gloves, respirators and so on that I have ever encountered. This will answer any questions about what eye protection is appropriate for what process. Some bonus chapters: 15 on "Children and Art Materials" and a fantastic chapter, 7, on "Emergency First."

This book is first and foremost geared to the individual studio artist. It is pleasant, easy to read and easy to comprehend. It is also applicable to other working situations. Highly recommended.

Health and Safety in the Jewelry Industry, Manufacturing Jewelers and Silversmiths of America, 1983. This text is presented in loose-leaf binder format, with each section devoted to a particular manufacturing process. It is, for the most part, well organized and straight to the point. The basic orientation is towards the manufacturing jeweler or silversmith, but it is still applicable to a small private studio. The major strength of this publication lies in its very specific descriptions of hazards as listed by processes. Unfortunately, many of the results of the hazards (resulting health conditions) are not treated as thoroughly as the rest of the material. In some sections, such as casting, there is very little elaboration within the text on how to detect symptoms of the worker's health problems. However, in the sections on electroplating, assembly & finishing, this is covered throughly within the text. Frequently, the reader is referred to other source materials to provide the conclusion to a health or safety measure. I find this lack of completeness to be very frustrating. Occasionally the inadequacy of the text is compensated for by the charts at the end of the section—this is true for casting and electroplating.

Another strength of this presentation is how much emphasis is put on the responsibility of the employer for maintaining a healthy work environment. Recommendations are made for what management should do, both ethically and as required by law. Very impressive, valid arguments are presented with frequency throughout the text about the economic advantages to an employer of maintaining a healthy work environment.

This text would be a good studio reference. I find the loose-leaf format provides quick, easy access to the information.

What You Should Know About Health and Safety in the Jewelry Industry, by the Jewelry Workers Health and Safety Research Group. This booklet is put out by workers in the Rhode Island Jewelry Industry for their fellow workers. It would be a good supplementary reference but is not sufficiently thorough to stand on its own. The best way to describe it is stated on page 3: "The booklet has presented general problems, but no one knows your work place better than you do. It's up to you to assess your situation, discover the problems and the proper steps to protect your health and safety." It goes on to say, "Work doesn't have to be so dangerous. Most of the safety hazards in the jewelry industry can be eliminated."

I found the booklet inadequate on the subjects of eye protection and acid disposal. I disagree with their section on ear protection. Vitreous, kiln-fired enamel is not covered, but enamel paint is. The section on acid use is also weak. But there is still enough helpful information in the text to warrant having a copy in your studio.

Submit questions for this column (typewritten, double-spaced) to Linda Weiss-Edwards, P.O. Box 1032, Sausalito, CA 94966.

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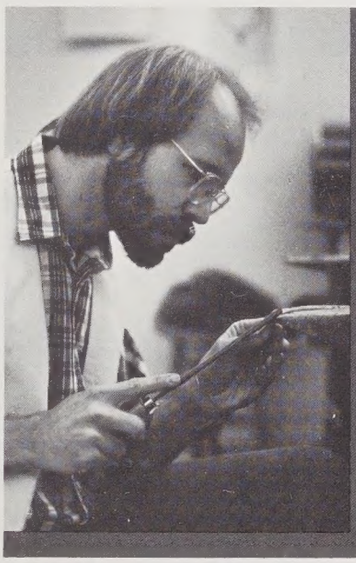

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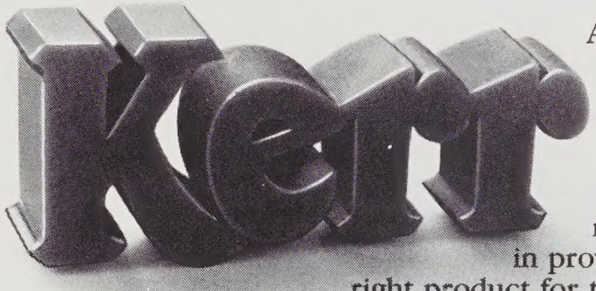

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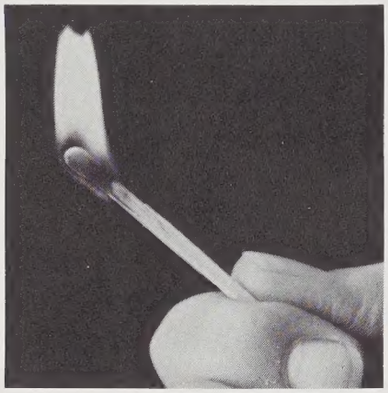

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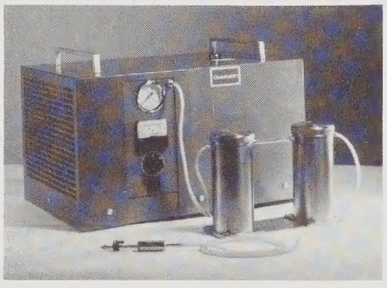

Spirflame has perfected water-fueled torch technology with over 60 world-wide patents and with features that no other torch has. For example, its multiple cell electrolyser generates more gas, with greater BTU's for fast soldering, especially on large pieces. A solid stainless steel generating system provides the ultimate in consistent performance. Spirflame's unique *twin* booster system (all solid stainless steel) completely eliminates moisture in fuel lines. Three patented flashback arrestors are built in for the ultimate in safety. Ask a competitor if their units have these features. You will learn that no other unit in the industry will compare.

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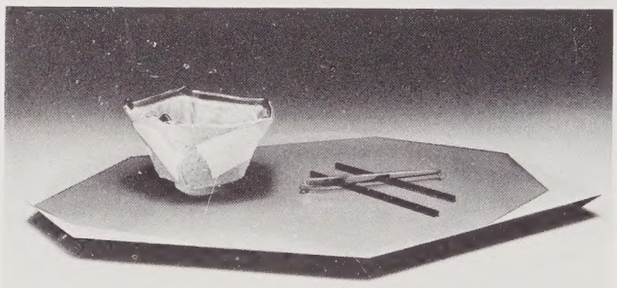

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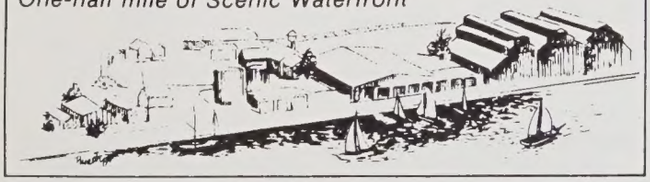

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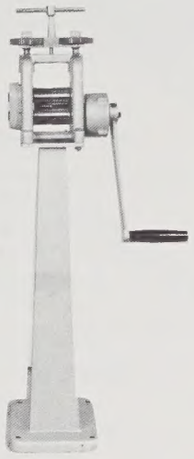

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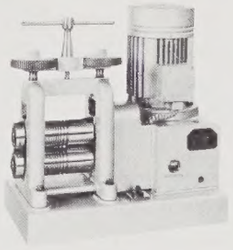

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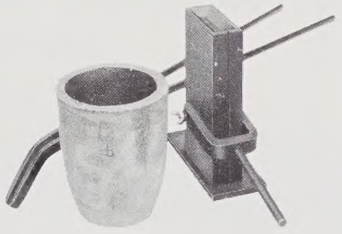

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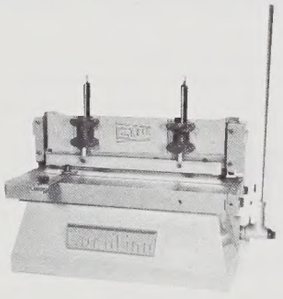

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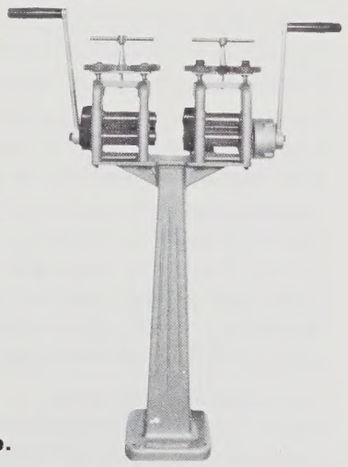

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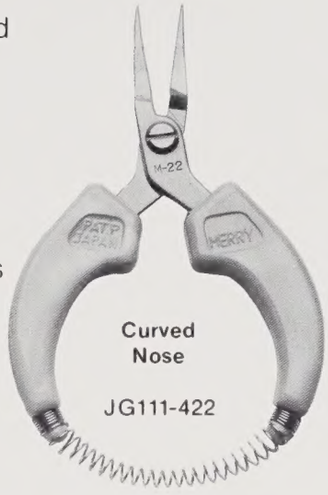

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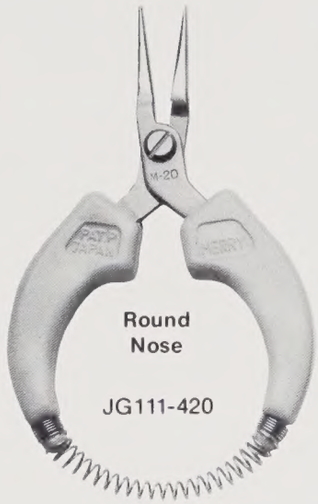

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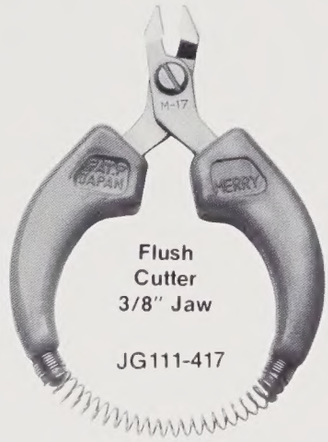

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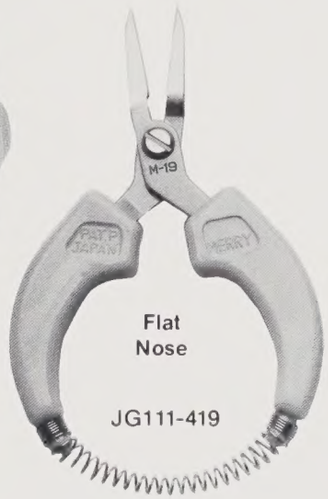

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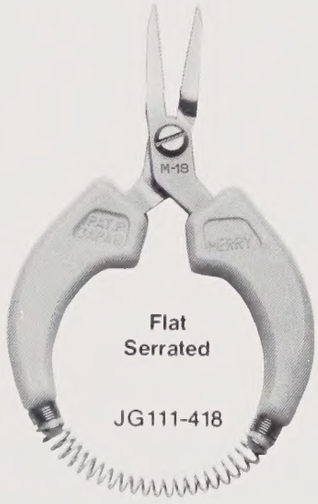

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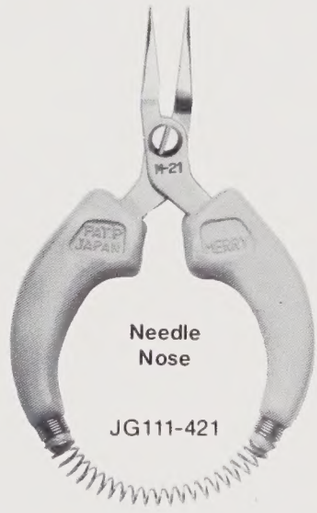

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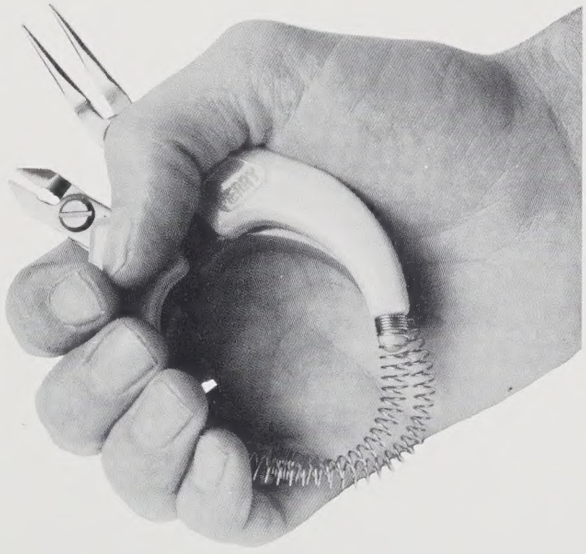

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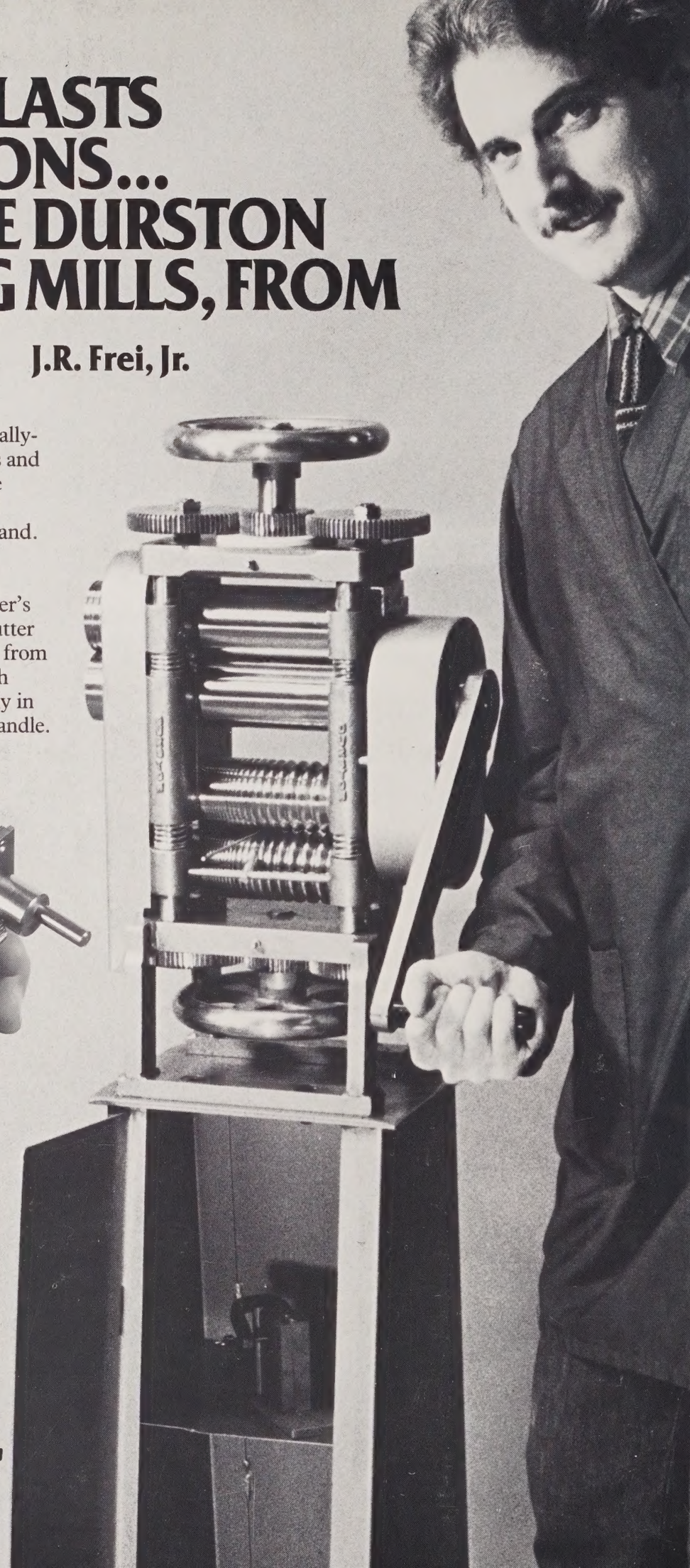

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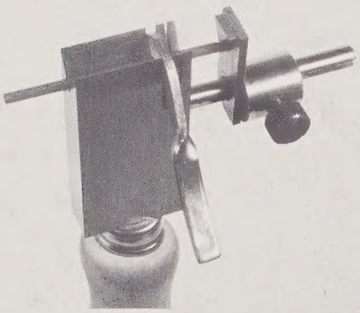

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